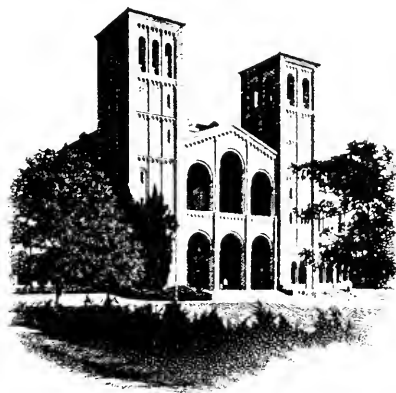


# CARTE ITALIANE

A Journal of Italian Studies



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Department of Italian, UCLA



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(213) 825-1940

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## FOREWORD

*Carte Italiane* is a graduate student journal which publishes articles in all areas of Italian Studies including literature, art, history, and folklore in English and Italian.

The editorial board is made up of graduate students from the departments of Italian, Comparative Literature and Romance Linguistics and Literature. Although all the articles in the present issue are from UCLA, it is our intent to publish papers from graduate students on other UC campuses as well as campuses nationwide.

As a service to our readers, we have provided a list of the Ph.D. dissertations written in Italian Studies at UCLA over the past ten years. The list will be updated with each successive issue.

We intend to expand our format to include a book review section in future issues.

The cost of *Carte Italiane* is \$6.00 to individuals and \$9.00 to institutions. The support and cooperation of the advisory board and the generous financial aid of the Graduate Students Association, UCLA have been instrumental in making the publication of this journal possible.

Special thanks for this first volume are extended to Professor Marga Cottino-Jones for her encouragement and assistance.





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# LAW, JUSTICE AND PROVIDENCE IN *PARADISO* VI

CRAIG KELLY

In *De Monarchia*, Dante employs the themes of law, justice, and providence in a syllogistic appeal for a universal emperor whose role it is to lead man via philosophy to the terrestrial paradise. The terrestrial paradise, man's temporal goal, is neatly distinguished by Dante from man's spiritual goal, salvation, the attainment of which is under the guidance of the Pope. Since one of Dante's purposes in *De Monarchia* is to defend the emperor's sovereignty from encroachments by the papacy, the separation of man's secular and spiritual ends is greatly emphasized. Nevertheless, in closing Dante writes:

Yet the truth upon this last issue is not to be narrowly interpreted as excluding the Roman Prince from all subordination to the Roman Pontiff, since in a certain fashion our temporal happiness is subordinate to our eternal happiness. Caesar, therefore, is obliged to observe that reverence towards Peter which a first-born son owes to his father; so that when he is enlightened by the light of paternal grace he may the more powerfully enlighten the world, at the head of which he has been placed by the One who alone is ruler of all things spiritual and temporal.<sup>1</sup>

This acknowledgement of the subordination of temporal happiness to eternal happiness anticipates the *Commedia*, where the supernatural penetrates the terrestrial paradise and where the poet emphasizes the divine sources of terrestrial law, justice, and history.

This is particularly evident in the sixth canto of *Paradiso*.

The theme of law in *Paradiso* VI is immediately suggested by the name of the soul speaking to Dante: Justinian. Justinian's *Corpus Iuris* was the source of practically all knowledge of Roman law in the Middle Ages. In *Paradiso* VI this great codification is introduced in terms of a religious mission: "per voler del primo amor ch'ì sento, / d'entro le leggi trassi il troppo e 'l vano" (vv. 11-12). The "voler del primo amor" which inspires Justinian shows that if the subject matter of the *Corpus Iuris* is a compendium of positive law, its foundation is the divine will. The divine source of positive or promulgated law is a Thomistic idea:

Laws that are humanly imposed are either just or unjust. Now, if they are just, they have the power of binding in conscience as a result of the eternal law from which they are derived, according to the text of Proverbs 8:15: "By Me kings reign and lawmakers decree just things."<sup>2</sup>

To further emphasize the religious importance of his works as Emperor, Justinian reveals that his conversion from Monophysitism to orthodoxy was prerequisite to his codification of laws:

E prima ch'io all'ovra fossi attento,  
una natura in Cristo esser, non piue,  
credea, e di tal fede era contento;  
ma il benedetto Agapito, che fue  
sommo pastore, alla fede sincera  
mi dirizzo' con le parole sue.  
Io li credetti; e cio' che 'n sua fede era,  
vegg'io or chiaro sì', come tu vedi  
ogni contradizione e falsa e vera.

(*Paradiso* VI, 13-21)

In this passage the word *fede* appears three times in alternate lines with a regular rhythm: *fede era*, *fede sincera*, *fede era*, and with a progression of meaning that expresses Justinian's own spiritual progress (v. 15, *fede*=heresy; v. 17, *fede*=the true faith presented as a goal; v. 19, *fede*=the true faith possessed by Justinian).<sup>3</sup> This rhythm and progression show that Justinian's power to carry out his great secular task is the result of a gradual spiritual transformation. It is significant that in converting from Monophysitism to orthodoxy Justinian accepts the unity of the human and the divine in Christ, a unity that is

relevant to the close connection between Justinian's earthly task and the divine will.

The necessary chronological order of first religious conversion, then *Corpus Iuris* is stressed again in Justinian's phrase "Tosto che con la Chiesa mossi i piedi" (v. 22). At the same time, this image of "walking with the Church" evokes Dante's experience in Eden when he joins Statius and Beatrice in accompanying the "benedetto carco."

La bella donna che mi trasse al varco  
e Stazio e io seguitavan la rota  
che fe' l'orbita sua con minore arco.

(*Purgatorio* XXXII, 28-30)

The presence of the *carro* of the Church in the terrestrial paradise is a notable shift from the separation of the two paradises in *De Monarchia*. Justinian's "Tosto che con la Chiesa mossi i piedi" refers not only to his own conversion but also alludes to the most vivid symbol in the *Commedia* of the interpenetration of eternal and temporal *felicitas*. This interpenetration is essential if Justinian's *Corpus Iuris* is to be seen as a manifestation of divine will.

Terrestrial justice, like positive law, is shown in *Paradiso* VI to have a divine source. Justinian explains to Dante the principle of the organization of Paradise, saying that different souls enjoy different measures of beatitude but that the souls in the "lesser" spheres feel no sense of "nequizia," which would be impossible in Paradise. Justinian employs a musical metaphor:

Diverse voci fanno dolci note;  
così' diversi scanni in nostra vita  
rendon dolce armonia tra queste rote.

(*Paradiso* VI, 124-126)

According to Aristotle,<sup>4</sup> justice is defined as the division of goods according to the nature and merit of the recipients. The division in Paradise is perfect, and celestial justice is "dolce armonia." True terrestrial justice must reflect this harmony. The primary contemporary example of injustice was, for Dante, the Guelph-Ghibelline struggle. If we divide the sixth canto of *Paradiso* into three parts (part one: Justinian identifies himself; part two: the history of the Roman Empire; part three: the introduction of the souls in the heaven of

Mercury), we find that invectives against the Guelphs and Ghibellines serve as transitions between parts one and two and between parts two and three. The transitions themselves are related by the common use of the verbs *appropriare* and *opporre*:

perche' tu veggi con quanta ragione  
 si move contr'al sacrosanto segno  
 e chi 'l s'appropria e chi a lui s'opporre.

(*Paradiso* VI, 31-33)

L'uno al pubblico segno i gigli gialli  
 oppone, e l'altro appropria quello a parte,  
 sì ch'e' forte a veder chi piu' si falli.

(*Paradiso* VI, 100-102)

The verbs *appropriare* and *opporre* indicate how the Ghibellines and the Guelphs violate Aristotle's notion of justice. The Ghibellines are guilty of injustice through lack of measure because they usurp for their own particular faction an imperial power which is meant to be universal. The Guelphs, on the other hand, failing to see that the papacy is not the proper recipient of temporal power, oppose the imperial sovereignty which they should recognize. The injustice of the Ghibellines and Guelphs contrasts not only with the "dolce armonia" of Paradise, but also with the harmony between the Holy Roman Emperor and the Church described by Justinian at the end of his digression on Roman history:

E quando il dente langobardo morse  
 la santa Chiesa, sotto le sue ali  
 Carlo Magno, vincendo, la soccorse.

(vv. 94-96)

Another element that links terrestrial justice to divine justice is the concept of *vendetta*. Here, however, we see how the temporal-eternal connection can elude human understanding:

che' la viva giustizia che mi spira,  
 li concedette, in man a quel ch'i' dico,  
 gloria di far vendetta alla sua ira.  
 Or qui t'ammira in cio' ch'io ti replico:  
 poscia con Tito a far vendetta corse  
 della vendetta del peccato antico.

(*Paradiso* VI, 88-93)

The secular justice of Christ's crucifixion is tied to the cosmic justice of the redemption. (Likewise in *Purgatorio* XXI, 6: "e condoleami alla giusta vendetta.") But how do we explain the third *vendetta*, Titus' destruction of Jerusalem? The problem goes unresolved until the next canto, where Beatrice solves the dilemma by making a distinction between Christ's two natures (which recalls Justinian's heresy and conversion). This is one of those aspects of justice which can only be illuminated by revelation. Justinian himself emphasizes the often enigmatic nature of divine justice when he tells Dante "Or qui t'amira in cio' ch'io ti replico" (v. 91).

In sum, Justinian in *Paradiso* VI is expressing the necessary connection between temporal and eternal justice. This union is stated by Dante himself in the sphere of Jupiter:

O dolce stella, quali e quante gemme  
mi dimostrarò che nostra giustizia  
effetto sia del ciel che tu ingemme.<sup>5</sup>

(*Paradiso* XVIII, 115-117)

The concept of *vendetta* brings us to a third theme: providence. The *giuste vendette* make up the core of Dante's providential view of Roman history. In *De Monarchia* II, xii, 1-5, Dante establishes a connection between Christ's death and resurrection and Roman history in order to prove a political point: that Rome had necessarily to be the center of the Universal Empire. In *Paradiso* VI, however, Dante uses the same connection to celebrate the political-religious harmony that Rome's history exhibits. Dante the "epic poet" takes up where Virgil left off, adding to Roman history the Christian-providential elements that his *maestro* could not know.

With respect to secular history, Justinian's story of the flight of the eagle in *Paradiso* VI completes the geographical progression that begins with Florence (*Inferno* VI), expands to Italy (*Purgatorio* VI), and finally includes the Roman Empire (*Paradiso* VI). But the real progress made in Justinian's presentation of history is not in geography, but in the theme of providence. This is most emphatically expressed when "the will of Rome" is shown to be in conjunction with the divine will:

Poi, presso al tempo che tutto 'l ciel volle  
 redur lo mondo a suo modo sereno,  
 Cesare per voler di Roma il tolle.

(vv. 55-58)

For Caesar as for Justinian, it is the divine will which sets in motion a great secular task. This joining of wills in the providential view of history perfectly expresses Dante's ideal of political-religious harmony. The theme of providence appears in both *De Monarchia* and *Paradiso* VI, but whereas in the former work Dante employs the spiritual element (Christ's entry into history) to justify the temporal (the legitimacy of the Universal Empire), in *Paradiso* VI Dante uses the temporal to glorify the eternal. This concentration on the transcendent is underlined by the constant flight imagery in the canto: "l'aquila," "le sacre penne," "il volo di Cesare," and so on. The Empire's course, because it is in accordance with providence, is indeed "above the earth," and this harmony with providence distinguishes "il volo di Cesare" from the "folle volo" of Ulysses.

Having discussed the themes of law, justice, and providence, we must turn to one of the souls introduced by Justinian in the sphere of Mercury: Romeo da Villanova, the "solitary just man," falsely accused of the mismanagement of court funds. Romeo is presented as a pilgrim: "Romeo, persona umile e peregrina." The lack of appreciation of Romeo's talents, the false accusations and Romeo's subsequent exile, are clear evocations of Dante's own plight. This is not the first autobiographical element in this canto. If Dante resembles Romeo in being a pilgrim and an exile, he also resembles Justinian in having undergone a spiritual transformation. The accomplishments of both Justinian ("E prima ch'io all'ovra fossi attento") and Romeo ("fu l'ovra grande e bella e mal gradita") are referred to as *opere*, which invites comparison with Dante's literary production. By associating both Justinian and Romeo with himself, Dante identifies with the political-religious harmony manifested in Justinian's work while at the same time expressing a lament for his own situation of exile, which shows that the ideal of harmony is not yet realized. As Aristotle said, in a perverse community the just man is a bad citizen. Dante, like Romeo, was in a situation where good citizenship was impossible.

Nevertheless, *Paradiso* VI ends on a hopeful note, revealing even more clearly the importance of Romeo's role in this canto:

e se 'l mondo sapesse il cor ch'elli ebbe  
mendicando sua vita a frusto a frusto,  
assai lo loda, e piu' lo loderebbe.

(vv. 140-142)

Here Dante is affirming, through the example of Romeo, the value of individual justice and individual salvation, which can exist even in an unjust society. The affirmation of individual salvation is not simply a desperate response to the failure of the Empire to materialize. For Dante the ideal of the Empire remains, and the addition of the concept of individual salvation is a step forward. That concept was lacking in *De Monarchia*.

From *De Monarchia*, a philosophic tract that neatly distinguishes man's temporal and eternal ends, Dante moves in the *Commedia* to an expression of the divine sources of terrestrial law and justice, and the subordination of human history to providence. The hint of the interpenetration of divine and terrestrial that we find in the closing lines of *De Monarchia* is fully developed in *Paradiso* VI. Just as the sacred chariot enters the earthly paradise, so providence and divine justice and law invest their temporal representatives. At the same time personal salvation is affirmed, regardless of the temporal circumstances. For Dante the concept of the Universal Empire has found its limits, but has become more profound.

## Notes

1. Dante Alighieri, *Monarchy and Letters*, translated by Donald Nicholl (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1954), p. 94.

2. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II, 96, 4.

3. Besides *fede*, Dante uses several other words three times in *Paradiso* VI: *sai* (vv. 37-43); *incontro* (vv. 44-45); *vendetta* (vv. 90-93); and *giustizia* (vv. 88, 105, 121).

4. As Etienne Gilson argues in *Dante et la philosophie*, Dante was greatly influenced by Aristotle's discussion of justice, which appears in the fifth book of the *Ethics*.

5. Here *ciel* stands for all of Paradise, not just one sphere.

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# AUERBACH AND GRAMSCI ON DANTE: CRITICISM AND IDEOLOGY

BETSY EMERICK

With its dramatic encounters, vivid characterizations, and an intriguing mixture of the personal, the historical-political, and the metaphysical, the tenth Canto of the *Inferno* has caught the imagination of many scholars and critics, among them Erich Auerbach and Antonio Gramsci. Both men took up their discussions of Canto X under extreme and unusual circumstances which profoundly affected their conclusions. And considering the diversity of these conclusions, it is interesting to note the similarities in the situations in which each man found himself.

Auerbach had been studying Dante for a long time and in a particular vein when he came to write the essay on Farinata and Cavalcante which forms a key chapter in his book, *Mimesis*. In fact, in the Epilogue to the book, he states that "Dante's assertion that in the *Commedia* he presented true reality" was one of the starting points for the investigation of the representation of reality in literature which culminated in the writing of *Mimesis*.<sup>1</sup>

Auerbach wrote the book in Istanbul, where he had been forced into exile by World War II. His feeling of isolation was strong both in a physical and in a scholarly sense: "the book was written during the war and at Istanbul, where the libraries are not well equipped for European studies. International communications were impeded; I had to dispense with almost all periodicals" (*Mimesis*, p. 557). The uncertainty

of the circumstances of the writing of the book cast even its future into doubt. "Nothing now remains but to find him — to find the reader, that is. I hope that my study will reach its readers — both my friends of former years, if they are still alive, as well as all the others for whom it was intended" (ibid.). This then is no ordinary critical study. Auerbach states his true purpose and the true meaning of the book in his last sentence, "And may it contribute to bringing together again those whose love for our western history has serenely persevered" (ibid.). Love for western history informs this work and is its function. In a time when the world was in chaos and history itself in doubt, Auerbach was one who wrote to save something from the chaos.

Through his writing, Gramsci, too, was seeking to save something from chaos and an even more profound isolation. In the autumn of 1926, when he was 35 years old, Gramsci was arrested by the Italian Fascist government. In 1928, after a trial, he was sentenced to more than 20 years in prison. In precarious health all his life, Gramsci did not survive his prison sentence. At the end of 1933, he was transferred to a clinic in Formia where his room was transformed into a prison cell. Ultimately he was granted provisional liberty and moved to a clinic in Rome in 1935. He died there on 27 April 1937, six days after his shortened sentence had expired. During this imprisonment, when his health and the authorities permitted, Gramsci wrote what have been published as *I quaderni del carcere*. At the beginning of the project he outlined his purpose in a letter to his sister-in-law: "Sono assillato (è questo fenomeno proprio dei carcerati, penso) da questa idea: che bisognerebbe far qualcosa 'fur ewig', secondo una complessa concezione di Goethe.... Insomma, vorrei, secondo un piano prestabilito, occuparmi intensamente e sistematicamente di qualche soggetto che mi assorbisse e centralizzasse la mia vita interiore."<sup>2</sup> Among the subjects which Gramsci later listed as topics for study was the position of Cavalcante in the structure and art of the *Divine Comedy*.<sup>3</sup>

We have two versions of Gramsci's ideas on Canto X, one in the *Quaderni* and one in a letter to his sister-in-law (LC, pp. 490-3). Neither is a polished essay such as Auerbach wrote. As with all of his prison writings, those on Canto X are fragmentary. Because of his health and the restrictions of prison life, he was unable to work regularly. His access to the texts and articles he needed was sporadic,

and he also feared censorship. Thus, he wrote in phrases, skipping from one topic to another, jotting down notes, outlining arguments. Sometimes he returned to a topic years later and polished the fragments into a more organized form, but much of the material never reached even a second draft state. Beyond the practical reasons for his fragmentary, incomplete style, however, lies a deeper reason which is linked to his very purpose in writing. Gramsci was writing "für ewig," but he was also writing to prove to himself that he was alive and that, against all physical and political evidence, he had a future. As long as the essays were not finished, the dialogue with himself and with the world continued. His biographer, Giuseppe Fiori, put it this way: "For Gramsci, this work became life itself: these memoranda and brief notes, these sketches of the first germ of ideas, these tentative ideas left open for endless development and elaboration, were all his way of continuing the revolutionary struggle, his way of remaining related to the world and active in the society of men."<sup>4</sup>

For both Auerbach and Gramsci, their writing at this time was a kind of life-line; it was a monument to their struggles and a proof of existence. Both the texts under consideration, Auerbach's essay in *Mimesis* and Gramsci's notes on Dante, take on new meaning when seen in terms of the circumstances which affected their writing.

Auerbach's chapter on Canto X begins with a long quotation taken from the section of the Canto where Farinata appears, through the point where Cavalcante sinks back in despair, and ending where Farinata again picks up his conversation with Dante. Auerbach sees the structure of the Canto as a series of encounters and interruptions: first, Dante is seen with Virgil; next comes Farinata's interruption and Dante's alarm, continuing with their conversation; this in turn is interrupted by Cavalcante's appearance, his exchange with Dante and disappearance; and finally the renewal of the conversation between Farinata and Dante. The first point Auerbach makes about the passage is that through their actions and words, both Farinata and Cavalcante show that although they are dead and in Hell, they still have the same personalities they had while on earth. By the manner of his sudden appearance, "Farinata's moral stature is developed, larger than life as it were, and unaffected by death and the pains of Hell. He is still the same man he was in his lifetime" (*Mimesis*, p. 177). When Cavalcante

talks with Dante about his son, "he breaks into anxious questions which show that he too continues to have the same character and the same passions that he had in his lifetime, though they are very different from Farinata's" (ibid.). This observation is one key to Auerbach's reading of Canto X and in fact to *Mimesis* as a whole, but he drops it for the moment and continues with a minute stylistic analysis of the language used in each of the interruptions.

His conclusion is that Dante mixed levels of styles and linguistic devices to an astonishing degree, not simply following one style with another, but using "such an immeasurably greater stock of forms, he [expressed] the most varied phenomena and subjects with such immeasurably superior assurance and firmness, that we come to the conclusion that this man used his language to discover the world anew" (*Mimesis*, p. 183). According to Auerbach, Dante represents a sort of turning point in the history of the representation of reality because of his technique of mixing the sublime with the trivial or the grotesque, and his way of raising what would, in the antique sense, be considered low to a sublime level. As Auerbach says:

nowhere could one find so clear an instance of the antagonism of the two traditions — that of antiquity, with the principle of the separation of styles, and that of the Christian era, with its mingling of styles — as in Dante's powerful temperament, which is conscious of both because its aspiration toward the tradition of antiquity does not imply for it the possibility of abandoning the other; nowhere does mingling of styles come so close to violation of all style (*Mimesis*, p. 185).

Auerbach's insistence on the importance of the mixing of styles reveals part of his view of the function of literature and language. If Dante is violating style, it is style in the ancient, limited sense of the term. According to Auerbach, exactly because he violates ancient canons of style Dante succeeds in capturing a reality in language. Only by writing as he does can he embrace the complete range of human experience and thus approach with language the historical, social, political 'reality' which is out there. Auerbach believes in the ability and necessity of the power of language to capture historical reality in all of its dimensions. As he says of Dante, "this man used his language to discover the world anew." What Auerbach values in Dante is his

achievement in having captured, or imitated, the world in all its infinite aspects. Dante's mixing of literary levels of style is crucial to the 'truth' of his representation of that reality.

At this point in his essay Auerbach returns to the discussion of the characters of Farinata and Cavalcante and their presence in Hell. For Auerbach, the unique aspect of Dante's presentation of these souls is his handling of the paradoxical situation of having to present 'real' characters in a realm where there is no time, no change, no sensory experience. What Dante emphasizes, without altering the essentially timeless nature of Hell, is a strong sense of the individuality of the characters. With Farinata and Cavalcante, the contrast in their personalities and behavior is very strong, especially since they are in the same circle of Hell and suffering the same punishment. Yet, Farinata remains the completely political man who rises up, "com'avesse l'inferno a gran dispetto,"<sup>5</sup> and Cavalcante is retiring, only motivated to action by his great love for his son.

Their differing attitudes toward their common fate distinguish Farinata and Cavalcante and these attitudes are distillations of their characters on earth. As Auerbach sees it:

earthly life has ceased so that it cannot change or grow, whereas the passions and inclinations which animated it still persist without ever being released in action; there results as it were a tremendous concentration. We behold an intensified image of the essence of their being, fixed for all eternity in gigantic dimensions, behold it in a purity and distinctness which could never for one moment have been possible during their lives upon earth (*Mimesis*, p. 192).

The significance of this union of the earthly and the heavenly realms through intensification-realization relates to Dante's concept of history. Beyond simply embracing the totality of historical reality through his use of levels of language, Dante has taken "earthly historicity into his beyond" (*Mimesis*, p. 193). Farinata and Cavalcante and the other beings in the *Commedia* do not change by virtue of being transferred to the other world. Instead, their existences there are manifestations and intensifications of their earthly existences. So that in Hell:

Farinata is greater, stronger, and nobler than ever, for never in his life had he had such an opportunity to prove his stout heart; . . . The same hopeless futility in the continuance of his earthly being is displayed by Cavalcante; it is not likely that in the course of his earthly existence he ever felt his faith in the spirit of man, his love for the sweetness of light and for his son so profoundly, or expressed it so arrestingly, as now, when it is all in vain (*Mimesis*, pp. 192-3).

What this means is that, for Dante, life after death is a continuation or fulfillment of life on earth and that the telos of human, earthly history lies in this realization of God's plan, not only in the sense of the approaching millenium, but in the sense that every earthly event is connected to its heavenly aspect in a vertical as well as horizontal way (*Mimesis*, p. 194).

This is Auerbach's concept of *figura*. Basically a Christian idea, it comes from the way the Old Testament was reinterpreted in the light of the New Testament so that all the Old Testament personages were seen as 'figures' of New Testament personages. The key to Auerbach's use of this idea is his stressing of the fact that:

a figural schema permits both its poles — the figure and the fulfillment — to retain the characteristics of concrete historical reality, in contradistinction to what obtains with symbolic or allegorical personifications, so that figure and fulfillment — although the one 'signifies' the other — have a significance which is not incompatible with their being real (*Mimesis*, p. 195).

According to Auerbach, it is by means of his figural presentation that Dante captures the historical 'reality' of the Christian universe in the *Commedia* and does so with a full sense of its tragic nature. The reality of Farinata, Cavalcante, and the other souls in the *Commedia* lies in their status as tragic, sublime individuals, damned or saved, existing in a history which embraces all levels and all time even into eternity.

This view of history and of its representation in literature is a high point for Auerbach. Obviously he, too, believes in history as a reality with a telos and in the function of literature being to imitate that reality, thereby preserving history and individual man's place in it.

When we read Dante, says Auerbach:

we experience an emotion which is concerned with human beings and not directly with the divine order in which they have found their fulfillment. Their eternal position in the divine order is something of which we are only conscious as a setting whose irrevocability can but serve to heighten the effect of their humanity, preserved for us in all its force. The result is a direct experience of life which overwhelms everything else, a comprehension of human realities which spreads as widely and variously as it goes profoundly to the very roots of our emotions, an illumination of man's impulses and passions which leads us to share in them without restraint and indeed to admire their variety and their greatness (*Mimesis*, pp. 201-2).

As Auerbach points out, the effect of the power of Dante's realism is to turn the attention to the individual and away from the Christian realization of the figure in the beyond. Thus, Dante is both the high point of Christian figural realism and the beginning of a secularization. What remains for Auerbach when the figural-Christian view of the universe breaks down is history in the sense of the individual working out his destiny in terms of the community. This, too, Dante has captured. His characters, such as Farinata and Cavalcante, exist in terms of their human reality. One perceives them through their pasts, their memories, and their development.

The value of Dante's achievement for Auerbach lies in the accuracy of his representation of this reality. In Dante, "we are given to see, in the realm of timeless being, the history of man's inner life and unfolding" (*ibid.*). This is the function of the word and of literature for Auerbach; to imitate, to represent, and, above all, to preserve and promote this view of the individual in history in all its complexity, variety and depth. Auerbach has defined his views this way: "The general image which seems to me capable of representation, is the view of a historic process; something like a drama which contains no theory but a paradigmatic exposition of human fate. Its subject, in the broadest sense, is Europe; I try to seize upon this in a number of individual critical attempts."<sup>6</sup> Auerbach does this in an evangelistic way. He is not merely describing the representation of reality as it has evolved through history, but proselytizing for a particular type of representation of a particular reality. Auerbach values in Dante a view of history and a use of language to promote that view which coincide

with his own concept of the historic process and its representation in literature. Both in methodology and in conclusions, Gramsci differs from Auerbach's definitions of history and reality.

Gramsci's comments on Canto X in the *Quaderni* begin with a series of notes: "Quistione su 'struttura e poesia' nella *Divina Commedia*, secondo Benedetto Croce e Luigi Russo. Lettura di Vincenzo Morello come *corpus vile*. Lettura di Fedele Romani su Farinata. De Sanctis. Quistione della 'rappresentazione indiretta' e delle didascalie nel dramma: le didascalie hanno un valore artistico? contribuiscono alla rappresentazione dei caratteri . . . "7 These questions and remarks already indicate both the direction of Gramsci's interest in Canto X and a basic methodological difference between his work and Auerbach's. From the first it is clear that Gramsci sees himself as involved in a dialectic with other critics of Dante and that his observations take the form of an answer to other readings of the Canto. Auerbach never mentions other readings.

Gramsci's main disagreement with other critics lies in the emphasis they had given to Farinata. For example, Francesco De Sanctis, as reported by Gramsci, "notò l'asprezza contenuta nel canto per il fatto che Farinata d'un tratto muta carattere: dopo essere stato *poesia* diventa *struttura*...fa da Cicerone a Dante" (*LVN*, p. 34). That is, "Farinata, dopo essere stato rappresentato eroicamente nella prima parte dell'episodio, diventa nell'ultima parte un pedagogo" (*LC*, p. 490). This mistaken emphasis on Farinata's place in the Canto allowed a reading such as De Sanctis' with its judgment that Farinata, in Crocean terms, changes from "poesia" to "struttura." Gramsci counters this view by stressing the importance of both Cavalcante and Farinata to the Canto and, in order to prove his points, he reads the Canto as a whole, something Auerbach neglects to do.

In the section of the *Quaderni* entitled, "Il dramma di Cavalcante," Gramsci explains his reading. Cavalcante's torment lies in the fact that he can see into the future, where his beloved son will be dead, he knows the past where his son was alive, but he cannot know the present; therefore at every moment he is tortured by uncertainty over whether his son lives or not. When he asks Dante why Guido is not accompanying him through Hell, Dante replies using the verb 'ebbe' in the *passato remoto*. Cavalcante then fears the worst and continues



to question. When Dante hesitates in answering, Cavalcante is convinced that Guido must be dead and, in despair, his doubt unhappily resolved, Cavalcante disappears. Gramsci makes the point that in this passage, Dante, "suggerisce [il dramma] al lettore, non lo rappresenta; egli dà al lettore gli elementi perchè il dramma sia ricostruito, e questi elementi sono dati dalla struttura" (*LVN*, p. 35).

In the dramatic presentation of the scene, Gramsci distinguishes three parts: the appearance of Cavalcante on his knees and humble in contrast to the heroic man of politics, Farinata; the conversation with Dante where in his third question, "non fiere li occhi suoi lo dolce lume?" (*Inf.* X, 69) Cavalcante reveals "tutta la [sua] tenerezza paterna...; [e] la generica 'vita' umana è vista in una condizione concreta, nel godimento della luce, che i dannati e i morti hanno perduto" (*LVN*, p. 35); and the resumption of the conversation with Farinata who, although he is Guido's father-in-law, shows no interest in whether he is alive or dead. Gramsci's reading stresses the fact that it is through contrast that Dante develops the characters of Cavalcante and Farinata. Each enhances and enriches the presentation of the other. Read this way, then, Farinata's explanation of the damned souls' ability to see into the future but not to know the present, comes in response to Dante's question. And Dante asks not merely for information but because he was so struck by his encounter with Cavalcante. Gramsci concludes: "[Dante] vuole che sia sciolto il nodo che gli impedì di rispondere a Cavalcante; egli si sente in colpa dinanzi a Cavalcante. Il brano strutturale non è solo struttura, dunque, è anche poesia, è un elemento necessario al dramma che si è svolto" (*LVN*, p. 36).

Gramsci amplifies this point in another note entitled "Il disdegno di Guido," referring to the line where Dante says to Cavalcante, "Da me stesso non vegno:/ colui ch'attende là, per qui mi mena/ forse cui Guido vostro ebbe a disdegno" (*Inf.* X, 61-3). Gramsci again attacks the problem in terms of a dialectic with other critics. For Gramsci, the important word of the passage is again 'ebbe.' "Su 'ebbe' cade l'accento 'estetico' e 'drammatico' del verso ed esso è l'origine del dramma di Cavalcante, interpretato nelle didascalie di Farinata: e c'è la 'catarsi'; Dante si corregge, toglie dalla pena Cavalcante, cioè interrompe la sua punizione in *atto*" (*LVN*, p. 38). Again, Gramsci emphasizes the

necessity to see all parts of the Canto as working together forming a poetic whole. And Gramsci reiterates that Dante's method of presenting Cavalcante's drama with expressive techniques which serve to invite the reader's participation in the drama, is due not to any lack of ability to present the drama directly, but for reasons of expression which change through the ages. Dante intentionally used the means he had at hand.

Gramsci's reading of Canto X seems to make a needed correction in the emphasis other critics had placed on Farinata, assuming Gramsci's representation of their positions is correct. His approach is a much more scientific one than Auerbach's since it includes an analysis of the Canto as a whole, with its formal and structural elements. Auerbach and Gramsci do come to similar conclusions about the equal importance of Farinata and Cavalcante to the meaning of the Canto and the way Dante develops the characters by contrast with each other, but Gramsci nowhere touches on the mixing of linguistic and stylistic levels which Auerbach is so interested in. Nor does he write about Dante's 'realism.' And Auerbach's concept of *figura* with its implications for a theory of history and his concept of the place of literature in regard to history are very different from Gramsci's conclusions.

For Gramsci, literary criticism was a part of the political struggle he was continuing to engage in even in prison. The very structure of his criticism reflects this concept of struggle. Gramsci had watched the Fascists come to power in Italy and had been imprisoned for his anti-Fascist positions. While in prison he was writing in an attempt to understand and explain the Fascist takeover.

Gramsci considered it his task to delineate the conditions for a future victory on the part of the working class rather than to uncover the reasons for the immediate defeat: and he maintained that these conditions could be found only in the historical process — that is to say, through a Marxist analysis of the real forces operative in national and international life, an analysis made precisely with the idea of transforming capitalist society.<sup>8</sup>

Gramsci's notes on the Canto are a small step in his analysis.

Gramsci's concept of the place of literature and literary criticism in the historical process becomes even clearer when one reads his

remarks on another critic, one he did not respect as he respected De Sanctis and Croce. Vincenzo Morello gave a paper on Canto X at the Casa di Dante in Rome on 25 April 1925, which was later published. In his notes on Morello's article, Gramsci accuses him of having read the Canto only superficially and of completely misinterpreting the relationship between Farinata and Cavalcante. Morello claims that Canto X is "per eccellenza politico" (LVN, p. 45), something Gramsci says he does not demonstrate, nor could he because, "il canto decimo è politico come politica è tutta la *Divina Commedia*, ma non è politico per eccellenza" (ibid.). Basically Gramsci attacks Morello for being a bad critic and scholar, saying it doesn't take much to demonstrate his ineptitude and uselessness. He states that Morello's writing "è strabilante da parecchi punti di vista e mostra quanto sia deficiente la disciplina intellettuale del Morello" (LVN, p. 40), and later refers to Morello and those like him as "ruffiani intellettuali" (LVN, p. 45). Then, with heavy sarcasm, Gramsci asks:

Ma intanto la sua conferenza è stata tenuta alla Casa di Dante romana, da chi è diretta questa Casa di Dante della città eterna? Anche la Casa di Dante e i suoi dirigenti contano nulla? E se contano nulla perchè la grande cultura non li elimina? E come è stata giudicata la conferenza dai dantisti? Ne ha parlato il Barbi, nelle sue rassegne degli 'Studi Danteschi' per mostrarne le deficienze, ecc.? Eppoi, piace poter prendere per il bavero un uomo come [Morello] e servirsene da palla per un giuoco solitario del calcio (ibid.).

Here, in a bitterly humorous tone, Gramsci alludes to several key points of his philosophy which underlie his writing about Dante and all his writing in the *Quaderni*.

He devoted a large part of that work to analyzing the position of the intellectuals, particularly what he called the "organic" intellectuals who were to rise out of the working class to direct and organize the group without losing their "organic" connection with their class. In very simplified terms his theory states that:

the proletariat can be victorious and guarantee the stability of its new order only to the extent to which it wins over the other exploited classes to its cause, and above all the peasant class. But the peasant class is integrated into an historical 'bloc' where middle-class intellectuals have the function of disseminating a bourgeois *Weltanschauung*, a concep-

tion of life elaborated by the great intellectuals of the ruling class. In order to detach the peasants from the landowners within this structure, it is necessary to encourage the formation of a new stratum of intellectuals who reject the bourgeois *Weltanschauung*.<sup>9</sup>

Compounding this problem in Italy was the fact that there was no national consciousness among the people. Italian culture and literature were cosmopolitan, not 'national-popular.' What was necessary was the creation of a popular literature which would seize and form the imaginations of the people and the task of the intellectuals was to create this national-popular culture. Gramsci writes:

La 'bellezza' non basta: ci vuole un determinato contenuto intellettuale e morale che sia l'espressione elaborata e compiuta delle aspirazioni più profonde di un determinato pubblico, cioè della nazione-popolo in una certa fase del suo sviluppo storico. La letteratura deve essere nello stesso tempo elemento attuale di civiltà e opera d'arte (*LVN*, p. 81).

What Gramsci maintained was that the intellectuals on all levels of society were the key to the success or failure of a change in society since they operated in civil society, meaning the whole complex of social, cultural, and political organizations and institutions in a society. "Hegemony...is pictured as an equilibrium between civil society and political society — more specifically still, as an equilibrium between 'leadership' or 'direction' based on consent, and 'domination' based on coercion in the broadest sense."<sup>10</sup> Thus the importance of literature and literary criticism comes from its function as a tool for both understanding the balance that exists among the various forces in society and as a means of using the power of culture to maintain the hegemony.

To return to Gramsci's writing on Dante, especially his comments on Morello's article, we can see how his criticism works in the light of his philosophy. His rigorous analysis is an attempt to come to the most accurate understanding of how Dante's writing functions, but in a disinterested way. His remarks in a letter about whether his son will love Dante are illuminating here:

ora prevedi che egli leggerà Dante addirittura con amore. Io spero che ciò non avverrà mai, pur essendo molto contento che a Delio piaccia Puškin e tutto ciò che si riferisce alla vita creativa che sboccia le sue

prime forme. D'altronde, chi legge Dante con amore? I professori rimminchioniti che si fanno delle religioni di un qualche poeta o scrittore e ne celebrano degli strani riti filologici. Io penso che una persona intelligente e moderna deve leggere i classici in generale con un certo 'distacco', cioè solo per i loro valori estetici, mentre l'amore' implica adesione al contenuto ideologico della poesia; si ama il 'proprio' poeta, si 'ammira' l'artista 'in generale'. L'ammirazione estetica può essere accompagnata da un certo disprezzo 'civile', come nel caso di Marx per Goethe (*LC*, p. 440).

For Gramsci, the critic's or intellectual's task is to examine literary texts in terms of their function in a social-political process. Thus the 'text' includes the critic's dialogues with other intellectuals and the circumstances in which these dialogues take place. Gramsci's bitter questions about the paper given at the Casa di Dante, the circumstances of its acceptance coupled with his own criticisms of it show his awareness of a definition of text which is far broader than a typological one.

In Auerbach's work we have a powerful attempt to use language to promote a particular view of reality and history. His article on Dante is, on first reading, far more impressive than Gramsci's notes, for he convincingly uses language to enforce his view of reality and history on the reader. The interest Gramsci ultimately holds, by contrast, is in his attempt to come to terms with a new definition of language, literature, and critical activity; one which does not imitate, represent or interpret an existing reality, but one which participates in that reality, taking its meaning from that reality as it at the same time creates it.

## Notes

1. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis* (1946; trans. Willard R. Trask, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1953, rpt. 1968), p. 554. All further references are to this edition and will appear in the text.

2. Antonio Gramsci, *Lettere dal carcere*, ed. S. Caprioglio and E. Fubini (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), p. 58. All further references will be to this edition, referred to as *LC*, and will appear in the text.

3. Antonio Gramsci, quoted in Giuseppe Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci: Life of A Revolutionary*, trans. Tom Nairn (1965; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1971), p. 26.

4. Fiori, p. 237.
5. Alighieri, Dante, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. G. Petrocchi (Verona: Mondadori, 1966), *Inf.* X, 36.
6. Auerbach in Wolfgang B. Fleischmann, "Erich Auerbach's Critical Theory and Practice: An Assessment," *Modern Language Notes*, 81 (1966), p. 539.
7. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere: Letteratura e vita nazionale, Opere di Antonio Gramsci*, (Turin: Einaudi, 1954), VI, p. 34. Hereafter referred to as *LVN*. Further references to this edition will appear in the text.
8. Lynne Lawner, Introduction to Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, selected and trans. Lynne Lawner (NY: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 41.
9. Fiori, pp. 237-8.
10. Lawner, p. 42.

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# FOLLY IN THE *ORLANDO FURIOSO*: THE TECHNIQUE OF THEMATIC AND STYLISTIC BUILD-UP

CYNTHIA C. CRAIG

The thematic and stylistic build-up which culminates in the two narrative peaks of the *Orlando Furioso* (Orlando's fall into folly and his recovery) draws together the threads spun by the various infrastructures in such a way as to demonstrate the central importance of the theme of the loss of self resulting from "o per nostro difetto, o per colpa di tempo o di fortuna" (34, 73, 6-7).

These various infrastructures serve several purposes. Generally speaking, they parallel the central theme both for emphasis and for symmetry. But their development is not strictly linear. Each narrows the scope of the story and focuses it on one component which contributes to the main crisis, sketching it with its own characters, in its own shades of dark and light. Also, one narrative peak represents the positive pole to the other's negative, as will be demonstrated through the poem, both metaphorically and actually. Thus, one image cancels out the other, resulting in a literal and figurative vanishing of both physical and psychological elements. In other words, the crisis of Orlando's madness is not resolved by his recovery. Ariosto alludes to a problem which is greater and more far-reaching than that, which necessitates a recognition of the essentially futile nature of such aspiration, and the impermanence of human achievement, whose reversal or negation is implied by its very existence.

The structure of the poem, consisting of the narrative line of the crisis of Orlando's madness and his recovery, is essentially symmetrical. This can be demonstrated not only through a study of the structure of the crisis itself, but also through an examination of the construction and the juxtaposition of the infrastructures which parallel it. The central theme can be broken down into its several components by means of a study of how these infrastructures contribute to the climate in which the events of the central narrative line take place, since they gravitate to one central, synthetic image.

The opening lines of the poem's first canto consist of an enumeration of the same basic elements which will serve as a framework for the narrative structure of the poem: "Le donne, i cavallier, l'arme, gli amori — le cortesie, l'audaci imprese io canto" (1,1, 1-2). This list of persons and objects participates in and contributes to the climate of self-doubt and loss of sanity: each of these elements has a separate narrative line based upon it which helps to build the story. Though Ariosto lists objects and persons, they serve as mechanisms which represent the concepts and values with which the poet is dealing in his work. Through them, once-fixed values will be shown to be in flux, and through the intervention of folly, chance, or time, each will show the opposite side of its nature, even as Orlando does. In turn, many of the questioned values will be restored and reaffirmed, though the tenor of doubt remains.

The extent to which the poet is questioning these concepts and values, and the intensity of the climate of doubt he creates, can be detected by his personal involvement in the crisis which befalls Orlando. Significantly, his first mention of Orlando's madness is tied to his own personal experience, setting the scene for the subsequent crisis with a gradual increase in intensity of tone:

Dirò d'Orlando in un medesimo tratto  
 cosa non detta in prosa mai né in rima:  
 che per amor venne in furore e matto,  
 d'uom che sì saggio era stimato prima;  
 se da colei che tal quasi m'ha fatto,  
 che 'l poco ingegno ad or ad or mi lima,  
 me ne sarà però tanto concesso,  
 che mi basti a finir quanto ho promesso." (1,2, 1-8)



This first mention prepares for Orlando's madness; a later reiteration of this same theme takes place in canto 24, the canto in which Orlando's madness begins. Here, however, the poet is now preparing the way for the recuperation of Orlando's wits by expressing a hope for his own eventual recovery, despite the severity of his own crisis:

Ben mi si potria dir: — Frate, tu vai  
l'altrui mostrando, e non vedi il tuo fallo. —  
Io vi rispondo che comprendo assai,  
or che di mente ho lucido intervallo;  
et ho gran cura (e spero farlo ormai)  
di riposarmi e d'uscir fuor di ballo:  
ma tosto far, come vorrei, nol posso;  
che 'l male è penetrato infin all 'osso. (24, 3, 1-8)

Similarly, the supporting elements listed in the prologue contribute to the unfolding of the narrative. The first of these elements is "le donne", and women play a central role in the crisis of Orlando's madness, on the two levels we have established. First, on the surface level of narrative cause and effect, it is Orlando's excessive, unrequited love for a woman which leads him to stray from the path of his chivalric duty, and, in consequence, he is punished by going mad.

Secondly, on the stylistic level, the changing shades of dark and light in which Ariosto depicts the role of women signal both the approaching crisis of Orlando's madness and the subsequent recuperation of his wits. Both individually and collectively, the position of the woman is questioned and rehabilitated. The character of Marfisa demonstrates this concept. Marfisa is perhaps the most isolated character in the poem; without family or background, she is seen only in the role of warrior, whereas Bradamante plays the dual role of lover-warrior. Her crisis of identity as a woman follows the crisis of Orlando's madness closely, and is interwoven with the story of Bradamante, which carries on the main line of the love theme. The resolution of the crisis of Bradamante's jealousy accomplishes several purposes. First, it establishes both Bradamante and Marfisa as women, on a purely physical and very concrete level, as can be seen in the description of their fight, which follows their chivalric duel: "che la battaglia fanno — a pugnì e a calci, poi ch'altro non hanno." (36, 50, 7-8). Secondly, this episode serves to situate Marfisa within a family structure, explains her back-

ground, and sets the scene for her baptism which seals the process of her socialization. Thirdly, it contributes to the general atmosphere of a rehabilitation of the status of women in the poem, the rehabilitation of a socially isolated person, and thus hints at the approaching rehabilitation of Orlando himself. Also, this sudden and miraculous explanation of Marfisa's origins has the added effect of completely nullifying Bradamante's jealousy — at least for the moment. Therefore, the infrastructures set up by Ariosto confirm both the thematic and stylistic build-up. The theme of Marfisa's story parallels Orlando's recovery, while in the images we also find a stylistic similarity: for example, Orlando is wrestled to the ground by his knights and his struggles are described in the realistic terms which have lent a physical immediacy to both scenes: "Ad Olivier che troppo inanzi fassi, — menò un pugno sì duro e sì perverso..." (39, 50, 5-6).

The woman is also described in the communal setting, and in this case as well we find the images which parallel the build-up of Orlando's madness and the resolution of the crisis. The two collectives of women in the *Orlando Furioso* illustrate opposing points of view; positive and negative poles. The first group of women is encountered in canto 19; these women murder or imprison all men who venture near their shores unless they can fulfill the rules of combat; they must defeat ten champions in battle, and then sleep with ten women. This cruel and unnatural society is destroyed through the combined efforts of the prowess of a woman, Marfisa, and Astolfo's magic horn (significantly, the gift of a woman, Logistilla). In addition, at the beginning of this canto, Ariosto has already signalled the reader that this state of affairs will not persist; speaking in general terms of the negative image of women which literature has heretofore presented, he says:

Le donne son venute in eccellenza  
 di ciascun'arte ove hanno posto cura;  
 e qualunque all'istorie abbia avvertenza,  
 ne sente ancor la fama non oscura.  
 Se 'l mondo n'è gran tempo stato senza,  
 non però sempre il mal influo dura;  
 e forse ascosi han lor debiti onori  
 l'invidia o il non saper degli scrittori." (20, 2, 1-8)

And such, indeed, is the case in Ariosto's poem. The next group of women encountered presents the opposite image, through the story of Marganorre and Drusilla. Here the virtuous nature of women is restored; in answer to the flexible morals of a Doralice or an Orrigille, we have instead a woman who commits suicide rather than submit to her husband's murderer. And in the prologue to this canto, Ariosto has reintroduced a theme which signals to the reader the approaching of a crisis. In canto 20 he has warned that the negative image of women would give way to a positive one, and now in canto 37 a lengthy argument contends that the time has come for women to receive their due praises and to be fairly represented in literature:

che, come cosa buona non si trova  
che duri sempre, così ancor né ria.  
Se le carte sin qui state e gl'inchiostri  
per voi non sono, or sono a' tempi nostri. (37, 7, 5-8).

Not only is this passage a near echo of 20, 3, 1-4:

Ben mi par di veder ch'al secol nostro  
tanta virtu fra belle donne emerga,  
che può dare opra a carte et ad inchiostro,  
perché nei futuri anni si disperga... (20, 3, 1-4)

but the two statements also contribute to the creation of a climate of flux, of progression, of a passage from evil toward good, preparing for Orlando's similar passage.

The next component of Ariosto's fictive world is "i cavallier". Indeed, throughout the poem, it is most notably the folly of man which gives rise to the various crises of the narrative. Can it be shown that these secondary crises in any way parallel Orlando's, and do they help to create the climate of anticipation which prepares the reader for the loss and the recuperation of his wits? Do they in addition bring into relief some of the nuances of Orlando's crisis?

One parallel example to Orlando's folly can be found in the episode of Grifone, who follows Orrigille and Martano to Damascus, having been deluded into believing that Orrigille is still faithful to him. The results are serious, though not so serious as they are for Orlando; Grifone is betrayed and imprisoned, though eventually he, too, regains the honor he had lost. But the reader is left with an overriding sense of

his folly in having believed Orrigille's tale, even as Orlando will attempt to delude himself into believing that it is another Angelica who has married Medoro.

This theme of delusion is worthy of further study; perhaps its most fully developed metaphor is found in the episode of the magic castle of Atlante, into whose trap men and women alike are lured by false images of their lovers created through sorcery. Even Bradamante, warned in advance by Melissa, is not immune to its lures: "perché voglio de la credenza altrui — che la veduta mia giudichi peggio?" (13, 77, 5-6).

Yet, in attempting to follow Ruggiero, she finds, as have all the others (including Orlando himself) that she has been following an illusion: "A tutti par che quella cosa sia, — che più ciascun per sé brama e desia" (12, 20, 7-8). Here many of the principal characters of the poem are made the victims of their universal weakness, pathetically wandering throughout the castle pursuing the false images of what they desire the most.

There are elements in Orlando's role in these canti, both thematic (his delusion) and stylistic (images and language which relate to and foretell his own impending crisis) which will be more fully developed later in canto 24 when he truly becomes mad:

Subito smonta, e fulminando passa  
dove più dentro il bel tetto s'alloggia:  
corre di qua, corre di là... (12, 9, 1-3).

Similarly, Rodomonte's rage upon learning of Doralice's infidelity foreshadows Orlando's madness; similarities in the text bear this out: for Rodomonte, Ariosto writes: "a tanta rabbia, a tal furor s'estende, — che ne a monte né a rio né a notte mira;" (18, 35, 5-6), and for Orlando: "In tanta rabbia, in tanto furor venne, — che rimase offuscato in ogni senso." (23, 134, 1-2).

However, beneath the semantic similarities, there is also an essential difference between these two stories; the conclusion of one represents the positive outcome, and the other, the negative. For Rodomonte, there will be no real recuperation, no salvation. His future becomes increasingly violent, from the killing of Isabella to his own demise. Significantly, the poem ends with his violent and bloody

death, not with Orlando's recovery, as if to warn of the inevitable consequences of excess. His is the counter-type to the story of Orlando's madness, as it is to Brandimarte's in battle. There is no salvation for him, whereas Orlando is restored to society. Orlando, Rinaldo, and Ruggiero will all achieve this recuperation, through different means; Orlando will reacquire his sanity, Ruggiero will be restored to the Christian social structure as was Marfisa. The cases of Rinaldo and Astolfo are problematical and contain nuances the others lack; they perhaps best represent Ariosto's intentions, an acceptance of the limits of human knowledge and of the impermanence of human achievement.

The next component of Ariosto's poetic structure is "l'arme", and the fates of the various arms and accoutrements of the Christian knights, which end up in the Saracens' hands, symbolize both the spiritual condition of the Christian army, whose soldiers are forever neglecting their duty for the sake of love, and the contemporary state of the spiritual and political affairs of the Italy of Ariosto's time. They trace throughout the complex narrative line of the poem a line of moral as well as physical straying from the right and an eventual return to it. In addition, this theme is connected with the necessity of recourse to the supernatural forces miraculously provided by Astolfo, who is also, by means of a supernatural voyage, able to restore Orlando's wits. The battle of positive and negative forces often takes place in this sphere as well, between sorcerers such as Melissa and Atlante, and through the use of magical weapons such as the ring or Astolfo's horn.

Love itself is mentioned next in the prologue, and the many digressions which follow throughout the poem on the nature and typology of love are summed up in the introduction to the pivotal canto 24:

Chi mette il piè su l'amorosa pania,  
cerchi ritrarlo, e non v'inveschi l'ale;  
che non è in somma amor, se non insania,  
a giudizio de' savi universale:  
e se ben come Orlando ognun non smania,  
suo furor mostra a qualch'altro segnale.  
E quale è di pazzia segno più espresso  
che, per altri vòler, perder se stesso? (24, 1, 1-8)

Furthermore, a very cursory examination of the themes related to love (which could constitute a separate study in itself) shows the development of this theme in its various aspects and dangers, and also shows how closely its line follows the development of the Orlando theme of insanity and recovery. Canto 1 opens with the link not only between the author himself and Orlando, but also between love for a woman and insanity; in canto 2, Ariosto describes the state which has led to Orlando's madness — the unequal state of unrequited love. In canto 4, he presents the dangers of delusion; and in canto 5, strife between men and women; in canto 6, betrayal; and in canto 8, love resulting from enchantment. In canto 9, very significantly, Orlando abandons his duty to search for Angelica: "or per un vano amor, poco del zio, — e di sé poco, e men cura di Dio." (9, 1, 7-8).

In canto 10 the problem of infidelity is presented, and in canto 11 the fact that reason is seldom sufficient to deter a man from temptation: "raro è però che di ragione il morso — libidinosa furia a dietro volga, — quando il piacere ha in pronto" (11, 1, 3-5).

Canto 12 presents a significant parallel image to Orlando's search for Angelica which culminates in such despair; he is compared to Ceres searching for her lost daughter, and the same vocabulary and images are used to describe both scenes, with both Ceres and Orlando tearing up trees in their anguish.

Canto 13 reconfirms the negative image of women, presenting the difficulty of finding a virtuous woman. In canto 16, Ariosto discusses the penalties of love, such as enslavement; in canto 19 he warns that changes in fortune will demonstrate the difference between true and false friends, emphasizing the temporal nature of human emotions. In canto 20 we are again confronted with the negative image of women, in contrast to the positive male image which Zerbino personifies in canto 21. This contrast is further intensified by the presence of Gabrina in canto 22. In canto 23 wrong-doers are warned that bad actions have bad consequences, just as Orlando is punished for abandoning his duty. Canto 24 describes the madness of love, which sets the scene for the expanded description of Orlando's madness.

The arrival at the moment of crisis in the poem signals a turning point in the narrative. Significantly, the insertion of positive elements now begins to take place, as one canto later, Ariosto already prepares

for Orlando's recovery, stating that honor and duty can be compatible with love, and that love can be a force which influences toward good ends as well as bad: "Dunque Amor sempre rio non si ritrova: — se spesso nuoce, anco talvolta giova." (25, 2, 7-8).

Furthermore, canti 26, 27, and 28 serve to refute the negative image of women, while providing a reversal of the earlier contrast with an example of the unfaithfulness of men, in canto 29. In canto 30 Ariosto warns of future repentance when love gives way to fury, thus implying the potential for a recovered state, in which regret will be felt. In canti 31 and 32 the narrative line is transferred to Bradamante's crisis, and its resolution foreshadows the resolution of Orlando's own crisis. Canto 34 further prepares the reader for the scene of Orlando's recovery, as the agent of that recovery, Astolfo, chases the Harpies, symbolizing psychological torment, back to Hell. In canto 35 Ariosto asks rhetorically who will restore his own wits; in Canto 37 he praises women, and in canto 38 he stresses the importance of duty over love, through the example of Ruggiero, in a reversal of the error committed by Orlando. Finally, in canto 39, Orlando's wits are restored to him by Astolfo.

Thus, though other characters are often the agents who carry out these themes, there is a central unity which ties together the many diverse infrastructures. Thematically and stylistically, they are all linked to the central theme and the central narrative line; for example, Bradamante's adventures and misfortunes, though only occasionally intersecting Orlando's on the narrative level, not only serve to set the scene for them, but actually interpret and illuminate aspects of the central problem which he impersonates.

"Le cortesie", or chivalry, as a theme, serves much the same purpose; the violation of his knightly duty to Charlemagne results in madness for Orlando, and likewise, his impending recovery is signalled on the stylistic and thematic levels by an elevation in tone, and a maximum stress on chivalric language and concepts. For example, Ferrau gives as his reason for fighting Bradamante: "Non che vincer spero, — ma perché di cader più degna scusa — abbian, cadendo anch'io, questi guerrieri." (35, 74, 2-4). Also, the duel between Ruggiero and Rinaldo, and most especially the duel between Ruggiero and Dudone, literally become duels of chivalric speech:

— Per Dio (dice), signor, pace facciamo;  
 ch'esser non può più la vittoria mia:  
 esser non può più mia; che già mi chiamo  
 vinto e prigion de la tua cortesia. —  
 Ruggier rispose: — Et io la pace bramo  
 non men di te; ma che con patto sia,  
 che questi sette re c'hai qui legati,  
 lasci ch'in libertà mi sieno dati. — (41, 6, 1-8).

Running alongside this theme is a perceptible tone of regret for the passing of a way of life which the author saw as better than the contemporary one:

Ben furo avventurosi i cavalieri  
 ch'erano a quella età, che nei valloni,  
 ne le scure spelonche e boschi fieri,  
 tane di serpi, d'orsi e di leoni,  
 trovavan quel che nei palazzi altieri  
 a pena or trovar puon giudici buoni: (13, 1, 1-6)

Having discussed the role played by the woman in the build-up to Orlando's madness, and in his recovery as well, the role of the couple ought to be examined also. For example, the couple of Angelica and Medoro proves disastrous to Orlando on the surface level of narrative cause and effect. But what sort of infrastructures do the other pairings create, and do they contribute to the structure of the main theme? Many pairings occur in the canti immediately preceding Orlando's fall into folly, and dissolve with equal rapidity (Zerbino-Gabrina, Pinabello-La Donzella, Orlando-Isabella, etc.), and this climate of instability provides the psychological plane with anguish in preparation for Orlando's madness, itself the result of the pairing of Angelica and Medoro. Orlando has witnessed the fragility of the couple; now it becomes his personal experience (Bireno-Olimpia, Zerbino-Isabella). The instability of the Isabella-Zerbino couple was at first due to temporary circumstances, but in the violent explosion of events in the wake of Orlando's madness, the tragic destruction of this couple becomes permanent. The climate of impending tragedy is prepared by Zerbino's reaction to the sight of the temporary pairing of Orlando and Isabella:



perché si pensa, e senza dubbio tiene  
 ch'Orlando sia de la donzella amante.  
 Così cadendo va di pene in pene,  
 e poco dura il gaudio ch'ebbe inante:  
 il vederla d'altrui peggio sopporta,  
 che non fe' quando udi ch'ella era morta. (23, 65, 3-8).

Is the role of the couple reestablished in the poem? This is not so clear. The eventual reconciliation of Bradamante and Ruggiero, though fraught with difficulties, serves to illustrate the point that duty must supersede love. However, the tragic ruin of the couple of Fiordiligi and Brandimarte leaves behind an overwhelming sense of loss. At best, the result is ambiguous, as in the case of Rinaldo and his wife; but here again, by means of this example, an important point is made; the necessity of accepting limits. Thus, in the *Orlando Furioso*, the couple is seen in all its various ramifications throughout the narrative: tragic (Isabella-Zerbino, Fiordiligi-Brandimarte), comic (Zerbino-Gabrina), deadlocked (Rodomonte-Doralice/Doralice-Mandricardo), and ambiguous (Rinaldo).

This lingering ambiguity brings the narrative full-circle. The stories of Rinaldo and Astolfo best illustrate this point. The two infrastructures which devolve from these two characters illuminate most clearly the follies and vicissitudes of Orlando's own adventures, and in addition, carry them one step further. By showing Astolfo's central role in the unfolding and resolution of Orlando's crisis, I hope to demonstrate that the choice of Astolfo for the fulfilling of this function was made with the express purpose of developing further the exploration of the theme embodied in Orlando's experiences.

When Astolfo is first encountered in the tale, he has already suffered misfortune from a foolish excess of love, just as Orlando will suffer later. Deluded and tricked by love combined with the magic element which accompanies Astolfo throughout the poem, he has not gone mad (though later we learn that he too has lost a share of his wits), but has been transformed into a plant and abandoned on Alcina's island. He himself refers to his folly: "Di mia sciocchezza tosto fui pentito" (6, 41, 7). When he is released, he receives instruction from the enchantress Logistilla, who embodies the opposing virtues of wisdom and good sense; she gives him a book which will

enable him to avoid enchantments and a horn with which to defend himself. Many of his adventures are symbolic and prepare the reader for his pivotal role in restoring Orlando's sanity: he destroys the illusory castle of Atlante, which symbolizes the delusions of love; he captures and kills Caligorante and Orrillo, respectively, just as he will capture and tie the mad Orlando. The net with which he binds Caligorante is, symbolically, the one made by Vulcan to ensnare the adulterous Aphrodite, combining the psychological problem of unfaithfulness and the fantasy element. When he chases the Harpies back to Hell, his role in eradicating the mental torment of Orlando is foretold. In addition, he uses his horn to destroy the island of the women, who symbolize all of the negative characteristics exhibited by individual women in the narrative. He travels to Hell, where he learns of the punishment of the ungrateful, and thence to the Earthly Paradise, a scene reminiscent of the idyllic landscape in which Orlando's madness takes place. He is also warned by Saint John of the transitory nature of fame through the image of the waters of Lethe. His personal experience will also serve as an illustration of the vanity of achievement. He learns that the things stored on the moon have been lost through time, chance, or our own folly. We are told that, after restoring his own wits, Astolfo was wise until he lost them again. Thus, the feeling of achievement in Orlando's recovery is negated even before that recovery actually takes place.

A profound sense of the absurdity of human endeavor is the overriding feeling which remains at the resolution of the poem. Nowhere is this feeling of vanity, of emptiness resulting from the final synthesis of thematic elements, more acutely felt than when the boats and armies created by Astolfo's magic are turned again into stones and leaves which blow away in the wind. This literal disappearance of both physical and psychological elements alludes to the larger problem of the futility of mortal accomplishment. Though Orlando's wits have been restored, and the battle is won, we are left with a sense of loss, an overwhelming awareness of the impermanence and fragility of life. All the values of love, war, and the chivalric code have been questioned. The essential opposites of folly and wisdom have synthesized and vanished. What, then, is left?

The answer is most clearly demonstrated by Rinaldo's acceptance of limits and measures. In his refusal to drink the wine which will tell him whether or not his wife is faithful, he imposes limits on his own desire to know, and reestablishes the value of faith. If Orlando's madness is the result of excess, Rinaldo's wisdom is an acceptance of limitations:

...ben sarebbe folle  
 chi quel che non vorria trovar, cercasse.  
 Mia donna è donna, et ogni donna è molle:  
 lascian star mia credenza come stasse.  
 Sin qui m'ha il creder mio giovato, e giova:  
 che poss'io megliorar per farne prova? (43, 6, 3-8)

This leaves a far more satisfying, or at least realistically based, feeling of resolution than the uncorking of the vessel containing Orlando's wits. In addition, Rinaldo himself draws parallels between his own choice and that which has faced humankind since the folly of Adam, "che tal certezza ha Dio più proibita, — ch'al primo padre l'arbor de la vita." (43, 7, 7-8).

Furthermore, against the void created by the disappearance of Astolfo's magic, the inescapable sense of the vanity of endeavor left by the knowledge that Astolfo's cure is only temporary, and against the poet's poignant awareness of the passing of a tradition based on symmetry and measure, of a way of life palpable beneath the fantastical surface, we are faced with the fixed, permanent, symmetrical structure of the poetic creation itself, so clearly perceptible in a study of its thematic and stylistic elements.



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# VICO'S *DE NOSTRI TEMPORIS STUDIORUM* RATIONE AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH THOUGHT

DEBORAH KIER BIRNS

In the meagre collection of non-Italian references to Vico which appear prior to the first translation of his masterpiece, the *Scienza Nuova*, in 1948, he is mentioned characteristically as a mystic precursor of the Romantic movement. C.E. Vaughan's 1921 address on the then unknown Vico and his *Scienza Nuova* is typical: Vico, he told his audience, was "the first to herald the great poetic revival of the eighteenth century: the first to demand that Poetry should be released from the gilded cage in which Pope and Boileau had imprisoned her."<sup>1</sup> But there is more to Vico than his theories of poetic imagination, childhood fancy, and cultural evolution which scholars have singled out for their impact upon Coleridge, Rousseau, and Herder. And there is far more to Vico's writings than the *Scienza Nuova*. In a recently published collection from a symposium honoring Vico's tercentenary (1668-1968), historians, philosophers, anthropologists, educators, linguists, sociologists, poets, and critics from both sides of the Atlantic expand their studies of Vico to include his Latin works, his sources, and the broad arc of his influence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Where they detect no direct Vichian influence, these scholars trace the remarkable parallels between Vico's visionary philosophy and that of later thinkers. If Vico has never had a well-defined place in the history of ideas it is not, Giorgio Tagliacozzo assures us, because of the obscurity of his writings, but because "Vico's thought embraced too

many different aspects of too many cultural epochs, presupposed the simultaneous dissolution of too many traditions and commonplaces, and represented too original a synthesis to gain a hold at the time of its formation and immediately thereafter."<sup>2</sup>

Despite the breadth and depth of the *Symposium's* articles, there remains a surprising tendency to extract Vico from his own time and to view his thoughts merely as precursors of later writings. Without denying that Vico's "original synthesis" dissolved many eighteenth-century "traditions and commonplaces," we must also view him as a man of his own time who shared the "traditional" and "untraditional" thoughts of other eighteenth-century writers. Although Rene Wellek alone in the *Symposium* deals with Vico in his own period, the thrust of his essay is not to make connections, but to deny that anyone "in the eighteenth century, least of all in Great Britain, absorbed or even discussed ... Vico's stupendous theme of history."<sup>3</sup> Wellek does, however, suggest that cultural convergence in the eighteenth century may explain the ubiquity of "Vichian" ideas. To understand Vico as a man of his own time and to place him in relation to eighteenth-century England, we must see that he expresses many ideas considered by his English contemporaries, as well as vice versa. After all, Vico, too, had read the Latin works of many great seventeenth-century English thinkers — Bacon, Hobbes, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Stanley, Selden, and Dempster among them — and had been moved by them.<sup>4</sup> It is thus very likely that the cultural and philosophical attitudes driving eighteenth-century Englishmen to evolve (to borrow Kuhn's term) a "paradigm shift" were also working on Vico through the same sources.

Vico's *De nostri temporis studiorum ratione* (*On the Study Methods of Our Time*) was delivered as an address to the students at the University of Naples in 1708, and published in 1709. It was not translated into English until 1965; its "non-Italian bibliography [is] practically non-existent."<sup>5</sup> Yet the *De ratione* is considered by the doyen of Vico studies to be "the most important pedagogic essay between Locke's *Thoughts on Education* (1693) and the *Emile* (1762) of Rousseau."<sup>6</sup> Moreover, its focus on the famous "Querelles des Anciens et des Modernes" in seventeenth and eighteenth-century England, France, and Italy places Vico well within the concerns of his own time, and therefore provides us with a valuable comparison of Vico's ideas and those of his English contemporaries.

While in the France of Boileau and Perrault the "Querelle" was an exclusively literary one, in England, as R.F. Jones amply demonstrates, it embraced, and centered on, Baconian experimental science.<sup>7</sup> By the time Swift wrote *A Tale of a Tub* and the *Battle of Books* (circa 1696), the controversy had been largely settled in England in favor of modern science.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless stirrings were still heard and in 1690 Swift's patron, Sir William Temple, published a defense of the superiority of ancient philosophy and science in his *Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning*. The small flurry caused by Temple's *Essay* and Wotton's response to him in *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694) reawakened the debate that had occurred between the Royal Society and its attackers following the publication of Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* in 1667. When Bentley and Boyle joined opposite sides of the renewed fray, Swift armed his pen with satiric barbs and began to write the *Tale* and the *Battle*. From Dennis's *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* in 1701 through Johnson's observations late in the eighteenth-century, English writers continued to debate the merits of the Ancients and Moderns in learning and poetic inspiration.

Vico, like Swift, wrote in response to a strong modernist sentiment in the Italian intellectual community, Cartesianism dominated philosophical methodology and Vico felt compelled, as a professor of rhetoric, to defend the classical humanities from the radical anti-historicism and depreciation of language and literature that came in Descartes's wake. Although Vico was utterly devoted to Baconian science, the Englishman's antitraditionalism displeased him; he felt "implicit in it a rejection of the heritage of that humanism...so dear to his heart."<sup>9</sup> But there is much of the modern in Vico too. In the *De ratione* he opens the debate between Ancients and Moderns beyond "humanitas versus science" to embrace psychology, literature, eloquence, mathematics, and the way we study them. He admits from the outset that the Moderns' study methods "seem, beyond any doubt, better and more correct than those of the Ancients."<sup>10</sup> But rather than align himself wholly with one camp or the other, as did his Italian predecessors and most other writers of the period, Vico understood the reciprocity of ancient and modern learning, and culled from each the best it had to offer.

If Vico and Swift come to widely differing conclusions about the nature of man's learning and imagination, nevertheless they base their objections to modernism on a strikingly similar premise: both write as adversaries to any abstract intellectual schema "which forces tumultuous, contradictory human nature into the straight jacket of an absolute truth, of a truth excogitated, dreamt of, but never to be met with in reality."<sup>11</sup> Vico opens the *De ratione* with a skeptical assessment of man's ability to know anything absolutely: "all that man is given to know is, like man himself, limited and imperfect" (DR, p. 35). Like Swift, Vico never dismisses this sense of man's limitations for long. Time and again he reminds us that men "are, for the most part, but fools...ruled, not by forethought, but by whim or chance" (DR, p. 4); that "Nature and life are full of incertitude" (DR, p. 15). Small wonder, then, that the Cartesian notion of "clear and distinct ideas" is repugnant to the Vichian mind. Vico does not quarrel with advances in modern chemistry, anatomy, pharmacology, geography, or mechanics; these are benefits of the Moderns' superior insight and "complementary aids."<sup>12</sup> But for "the instruments with which modern science operate[s]" (DR, p. 12), that is, for strictly deductive syllogistic reasoning, Vico has no praise. Descartes's philosophical criticism is "jejune and aridly deductive" (DR, p. 17); it stifles the growth of common sense by preventing judgments based on verisimilitude. And this inability to reason from verisimilitude and probability threatens Vico's own field: he perceives

a danger that instruction in advanced philosophical criticism may lead to an abnormal growth of abstract intellectualism, and render young people unfit for the practice of eloquence...Satisfied with abstract truth alone, and not being gifted with common sense, these [Cartesian] doctrinaires do not bother to find out whether their opinion is held by the generality and whether the things that are truths to them are also true to other people.

(DR, pp. 13, 35)

Vico believes that the Ancients avoided undue and premature emphasis on abstract reasoning by teaching their youths to argue from set topics rather than from analytical geometry. They thus nurtured memory and imagination in their adolescents "without doing violence to nature, but gradually and gently and in step with the mental



capacities of their age" (DR, p. 14). Personal conviction and simple eloquence are, for Vico, the only persuasive tools of argument because they are derived from contact with and experience of reality. Moving outward from the sphere of rhetoric, Vico argues that scientific research and Galen-styled medical treatment based solely on speculation will result only in sunken dreams and dead patients. The Cartesian method in the *De ratione* is, finally, "a divinatory art, an activity to be placed next to witchcraft."<sup>13</sup>

It is a short but significant jump from Vico's veiled attacks on Descartes and his mild humor at the expense of Perot's sunken ship to Swift's satiric excoriation of Descartes in *A Tale of a Tub*. In the *Tale's* "Digression Concerning Madness" Swift attacks his favorite bugbear, the "system." "Monsieur Des Cartes," like Alexander the Great and Jack of Leyden, receives Swift's wrath as a system-builder — a destroyer of common sense and a promulgator of cant. Like Vico, Swift is deeply suspicious of abstract reasoning, but where the Italian likens it to "witchcraft," Swift reduces it to utter madness:

...madness [has] been the parent of all those mighty revolutions that have happened in empire, in philosophy, and in religion. For the brain, in its natural position and state of serenity, disposeth its owner to pass his life in the common forms, without any thought of subduing multitudes to his own power, his reasons, or his visions...But when a man's fancy gets astride on his reason, when imagination is at cuffs with the senses, and common understanding, as well as common sense, is kicked out of doors, the first proselyte he makes is himself...<sup>14</sup>

Swift finally dispatches Descartes altogether in the *Battle of Books* when Aristotle's lance finds "a defect" in the Frenchman's "head-piece."<sup>15</sup>

In Swift's vision, imagination and memory are no longer the creative gifts of youth to be nurtured into eloquence and poetic genius, but the instruments of delusion. Where for Vico abstract speculation leads to dullness and falsehood, for Swift it induces the cosmic chaos of "A Digression Concerning Madness" and Gulliver's third voyage. In the kingdom of the Whore, Laputa, Gulliver finds men "so taken up with intense speculations, that they neither can speak, nor attend to the discourse of others, without being roused by some external taction upon the organs of speech and hearing."<sup>16</sup> Their houses are ill con-

structed, they can neither converse with Gulliver nor provide him with a decent suit of clothes, they live in constant apprehension of the heavens, and their wives universally cheat on them — when a stranger is available. In short, Swift presents a comic picture of a kingdom so discommoded by its lofty speculations that its male citizenry cannot even manage the fundamental act of fornication. At heart, both Swift and Vico are utilitarians; for both, science should confine itself to the concrete and the useful. Where Vico presents a single example of a failed experiment based on speculative reasoning, Swift's hypertrophied fancy runs amuck. He brings Gulliver to the Grand Academy of Projectors in Lagado, capital of Balnibarbi. Thinly-veiled parodies of the Royal Society's "virtuosi," the Grand Academicians of Lagado expend their energies speculating on multifarious ways to improve society. "The only inconvenience is," Gulliver reports, "that none of these projects are yet brought to perfection, and in the mean time the whole country lies miserably waste, the houses in ruins, and the people without food or clothes."<sup>17</sup>

As defenders of humanism's most authentic and durable values, both Swift and Vico turn in disgust from the Moderns' propensity to create elaborate and useless systems of abstract thought. But where, in the *Battle of Books*, Swift finally dismisses all the Moderns save Bacon as followers of Ridicule, Dullness, Ill Manners, and Criticism, Vico, a Baconian after all, shares many of their attitudes and sympathies. In their mutual devotion to common sense reality Vico and Swift paradoxically part company. For where Swift views imagination not as the "womb," but the "grave" of common sense,<sup>18</sup> not as the source, but the devourer of truth, Vico considers the distinction between reason and fancy to be a false one. In eschewing Descartes, Vico realizes that man cannot aspire to Houhyhnhnm-like sheer rationality without denying himself as an integrality of reason, fancy, passion, and emotion. Each stage of man's development, as each stage in the development of civilization, has its characteristic strengths. Vico needs neither Rousseau nor Herder to convince him that youth is "powerful in imagination" which "should in no way be dulled" (DR, pp. 13-14). Remo Fornaco, in his study of Vico's educational thought, explains that "per il Vico...ogni età ha un suo particolare modo di vedere e vivere la realtà, il che vuol dire che sarebbe un grave errore pedagogico credere che il

mondo e le cose assumano la stessa fisionomia per il fanciullo e per l'adulto."<sup>19</sup> In other words, Vico accepts the relativity of perception and therefore defends that imaginative part of man which enables him to create his own reality. Vico the sociologist, Vico the psychologist, leaves Swift in another dimension. His views on poetic genius in chapter VIII of the *De ratione* recall Dennis, Young, and Johnson rather than the good Dean.

In spirit, John Dennis's *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* of 1701, is not far from Vico's *De ratione*. Both men, after all, introduce the famous "Querelle" in order "to set the Moderns upon an equal foot with even admired Antiquity."<sup>20</sup> By learning from the Ancients, Vico assures his students, they will remedy their inferiorities and enrich the modern age. Inspired by Longinus's *Peri Hupsous*, Dennis argues for emotion, passion, and "enthusiasm" in poetry rather than restraint and adherence to formal rules. The prime impetus for this enthusiasm is "the Christian religion" (TFW, p. 469). Vico, although he couches his beliefs in more secular terms, also locates the sublime in poetic expression and calls on poets to "keep their eyes fixed on an ideal truth." (DR, p. 42). The aged Edward Young, in his *Conjectures on Original Composition* of 1759, seems to be the last Englishman to address himself directly to the old debate. His attitudes toward the effects of ancient literature on the Moderns exactly parallel Vico's. Vico demands:

What if I declared that the most outstanding masterpieces of the arts hinder rather than help students in the field? It may be surprising, but nevertheless it is true...Those who are endowed with surpassing genius should put the masterworks of their art out of their sight, and strive with the greatest to appropriate the secret of nature's grandest creations.

(DR, pp. 71-72)

Young, in turn, asserts that "illustrious Examples engross, prejudice, and intimidate...when we write, let our Judgment shut them out of our Thoughts" (TFW, p. 874). Vico contends that "since imitators cannot surpass or even equal the innovators, they can only fall short of their achievement" (DR, p. 71). Similarly, Young tells us that "Imitators only give us a sort of Duplicate of what we had, possibly much better, before" (TFW, p. 872). Young speaks for both of them when, with a

radical distillation of his treatise, he declares, "Imitation is inferiority confessed" (TFW, p. 881). Vico concurs with Young's assertion that although "the modern powers are equal of those before them, modern performance in general is deplorably short" (TFW, p. 878). Both writers thus hope to remedy the deficiencies of their times by exhorting their readers to use the beauties and defects of the Ancients as a "chart to conduct, and a sure helm to steer us in our passage to greater Perfection than Theirs" (TFW, p. 875).

Samuel Johnson agrees with Dennis's and Young's critical attitudes toward the Ancients, but goes far beyond them. Of all English poets in the eighteenth century, he seems to come closest to Vico's conceptions of poetry's function, method, and sources. And like Vico, he is a brilliant neo-classicist in search of a new paradigm to take him beyond the limits of neo-classicism. Vico laments in the *De ratione* that

the greatest drawback of our education method is that we pay an excessive amount of attention to the natural sciences and not enough to ethics. Our chief fault is that we disregard that part of ethics which treats of human character, of its dispositions, its passions, and the manner of adjusting these factors to public life and eloquence. We neglect that discipline which deals with the differential features of the virtues and vices...with the typical characteristics of the various ages of man, of the two sexes, of social and economic class, race and nation, and with the art of seemly conduct in life, the most difficult of all arts.

(DR, p. 32)

The core of Johnson's poetic canon rests on just this combined concern for "ethics" and the "typical characteristics" of humankind. We have only to recall his *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* or his diatribe against the pastoral in *Rambler* 37 to see that Johnson's most frequent criticisms stem from poetic abuses of either morality or reality. Imlac, in *Rasselas*, speaks for Johnson and echoes Vico when he tells the Prince that

knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; he must be acquainted with all the modes of life. His character requires that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition; observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations, and trace the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various institutions and accidental influences of climate or custom, from the spriteliness of

infancy to the despondence of decrepitude...he must consider right or wrong in their abstracted and invariable state...and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same...

(TFW, p. 1030)

Thus the essence of poetry for both men lies in its ability to capture Vico's "ideal or universal truth" (DR, p. 42). Vico echoes Horace and anticipates Johnson when he equates the duties of poet and philosopher. "The poet teaches by delighting what the philosopher teaches austere," he tells us. "Both teach moral duties, and both incite to virtue and deter from vice" by depicting human habits and behavior (DR, p. 43). Like Johnson, Vico sees that persuasion to goodness can only occur through "plastic portrayals of exalted actions and characters" (DR, p. 43), and like Vico, Johnson sees that a poet may "depart from the daily semblances of truth, in order to be able to frame a loftier semblance of reality" (DR, p. 43). In his "Preface" to *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, Johnson's defense of the abused Shakespearean "unities" volubly proclaims his Vichian ability to seek poetic truth beyond neo-classical rules.<sup>21</sup>

The parallels between Vico and Johnson are equally close in their attitudes toward antiquity. Once again, striking similarities in thought and expression — even taking into account the different languages — strains the absolute conviction that eighteenth-century England remained untouched by the Italian thinker and vice versa. And yet, we have no evidence at all to suspect that Dr. Johnson had ever read or heard of the still obscure Neapolitan rhetorician named Giambattista Vico. In the *De ratione* Vico concludes that "our reading...should be governed by the judgment of centuries; let us place our educational methods under their auspices and protection" (DR, p. 74). Again, the evidence of undeniable — although delayed — cultural convergence in Johnson's "Preface" of 1756: "The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted...is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood" (TFW, p. 1067). In fact, the "Method" of study Johnson proposes in *Rambler* 154 (1751), if translated into Latin, could be slipped into the *De ratione* unnoticed; if one "hopes to become eminent in any...Part of Knowledge," Johnson recommends, "he must first possess himself of

the intellectual Treasures which the Diligence of former Ages has accumulated, and then endeavor to encrease them by his own Collections" (TFW, p. 1000). Vico puts it this way: "The Ancients should be read first, since they are of proved reliability and authority" (DR, p. 74).

Johnson and Vico share the Baroque commonplace that the individual recapitulates the "immutable set of 'cultural stages' which the whole of mankind has traversed in its growth from infancy to adulthood, from primitivism to civilization."<sup>22</sup> Again in his "Preface" to Shakespeare, Johnson echoes Vico with "Nations, like individuals, have their infancy" (TFW, p. 1075). But despite their many striking congruencies, it is here that the two great thinkers part company. Where Johnson sees the fabulous world of mythical "giants, dragons, and enchantments" (TFW, p. 1075) as evidence of "vulgar," "plebeian," or "childish" credulity, Vico, in the *De ratione* and the *Scienza Nuova*, elevates mythic imaginings of the "phantasia puerilis" to their own level of reality — a reality purer and more spiritually valid than Johnson's "maturer knowledge."

It is because of his attitude toward primitivism and "phantasia puerilis" that Vico has been sundered from his more neo-classical attitudes and labeled a "pre-Romanticist." But such a view is facile, reductive, and misleading. Vico is, above all, a humanist, a philosopher, and a denizen of the 1700's. If he leaves his eighteenth-century contemporaries behind, it is not because he is atypical of his time, but because he pushes his theories to the level where modern sociology is only now endeavoring. Vico's seminal ideas on the individual's construction of social reality lie at the heart of the last decade's sociological controversy. And when, in his final peroration in the *De ratione*, Vico decries the fragmentation of education into the teachings of conflicting disciplines,<sup>23</sup> and calls for a new concept of education based on the organic unity of culture, he anticipates by over three hundred years the dilemma now facing American universities.

## Notes

1. C.E. Vaughan, "Giambattista Vico: An Eighteenth-Century Pioneer," in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 6 (1921-22), p. 288.
2. Giorgio Tagliacozzo, Preface, *Giambattista Vico, An International Symposium*, ed. Giorgio Tagliacozzo and Hayden V. White (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), p.vii. Hereafter referred to in text as *Symposium*.
3. Rene Wellek, "The Supposed Influence of Vico on England and Scotland in the Eighteenth Century," in *Symposium*, p. 223.
4. Wellek, *Symposium*, p. 218.
5. Maria Goretti, "Vico's Pedagogic Thought and that of Today," in *Symposium*, pp. 554-5.
6. Fausto Nicolini, quoted in Translator's Introduction, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, ed. and trans. Elio Gianturco (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p.x.
7. See Richard Foster Jones, *Ancients and Moderns: A Study of the Background of the "Battle of the Books"*, Washington University Studies, 6 (1936).
8. Jones, p.viii.
9. Enrico de Mas, "Vico's Four Authors," in *Symposium*, p. 8.
10. Giambattista Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, p. 9. All further references to this work are made in the text as "*De ratione*" or DR.
11. Goretti, *Symposium*, p. 574.
12. See *On the Study Methods*, p. 8. Vico includes, as "complementary aids," "works of literature and of the fine arts whose excellence designates them as patterns of perfection; types used in the printing; and universities as institutions of learning."
13. Domenico Vittorini, "Giambattista Vico and Reality: An Evaluation of *De nostri temporis studiorum ratione* (1708)," *MLQ*, 13 (1952), p. 92.
14. Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of A Tub*, in *Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings*, ed. Louis A. Landa (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), p. 331.
15. Swift, *The Battle of Books*, p. 373.
16. Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Book III, p. 128.
17. Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Book III, p. 144.
18. Swift, *A Tale of A Tub*, p. 332.
19. Remo Fornaca, *Il pensiero educativo di Giambattista Vico* (Torino: G. Giappichelli Editore, 1957), p. 206.
20. John Dennis, *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry in Eighteenth Century English Literature*, ed. Tillotson, Fussell, and Waingrow (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1969), p. 464. Hereafter referred to as TFW in the text.
21. See Johnson's "Preface," TFW, pp. 1072-3.
22. Elio Gianturco, Translator's Introduction, *On the Study Methods*, p.xxvii.
23. These unharmonized disciplines are mentioned in the *De ratione* on p. 77. (Aristotelian, Epicurean, Cartesian, Galenist, Accursian, Fauvreaan, Alciatian.)





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## DUE PASSI MANZONIANI: IL RITO DEL VIAGGIO

PIER MASSIMO FORNI

Il motivo del viaggio, sottolineato nella sua accezione concreta e, per così dire, orizzontale, è ben presente nella letteratura sette-ottocentesca. Il viaggio come autopedagogia, come iniziatica scoperta del mondo, come gusto di andare e di vedere; ma anche come attrazione nell'esotico, nell'utopico, nel favoloso. Basterà ricordare autori come Fielding, Sterne, Swift, Foscolo, Alfieri; il più lontano Defoe e il contemporaneo del Manzoni Dickens.

In Manzoni il motivo del viaggio si complementa, in misura decisiva, di altri valori. Tenteremo di dimostrare l'esistenza e l'importanza di una dimensione verticale in due esempi di viaggio manzoniani. Dimensione verticale sia nella direzione di discesa nella profondità della coscienza, sia in quella di elevazione verso i divini misteri. Cercheremo di dare conto dei particolari modi tenuti dall'autore nel trattare il motivo tradizionale, di vedere come si presenti il viaggio investito di funzioni interne ad un'opera intrisa di spiritualità cristiana.

Giovanni Getto individua in due capitoli polarizzati verso il motivo del viaggio (e della fuga), l'VIII e il XVII, i vertici dei *Promessi Sposi*, i "due supremi momenti in cui i protagonisti, Renzo e Lucia, si rivelano nella loro più autentica spiritualità"<sup>1</sup>.

Lasciando per ora da parte il capitolo VII con il celeberrimo "Addio, monti", ricordiamo che nel XVII Renzo, ricercato dalla polizia, si trova

in viaggio da Milano al bergamasco, senza conoscere l'esatta via da prendere. Sa solo che l'Adda (linea di confine tra Ducato di Milano e Repubblica Veneta) deve rappresentare l'immediato riferimento per la salvezza. Una volta sul fiume, pensa, sarà possibile trovare un passaggio e lasciare alle spalle una patria al momento pericolosa. Ciò avverrà con l'aiuto della Provvidenza, vera protagonista dell'ultima parte di questo capitolo posto a suggello della somma di vicende che hanno messo alla dura verifica della realtà sociale e politica cittadina l'umanità generosa e imperfetta del montanaro Renzo.

L'episodio dell'avvicinamento all'Adda nel XVII capitolo dei *Promessi Sposi* presenta, nel suo complesso e in una ricca serie di dettagli testuali, una singolare somiglianza con quello del viaggio del diacono Martino nella scena 3 dell'atto II dell'*Adelchi*.

L'importanza decisiva del viaggio di Martino nell'economia della tragedia manzoniana è funzionale e poetica. Funzionale perché consente, con un tocco miracoloso, di superare la situazione di stallo venutasi a creare tra le due genti nemiche a confronto. Carlo Magno, spada di Dio, vorrebbe soccorrere il papa Adriano messo in gravi difficoltà dai Longobardi, ma è bloccato, con tutto l'esercito franco, ai confini d'Italia. Le truppe longobarde, infatti, da favorevoli posizioni strategiche, presidiano le Chiuse, unico valico conosciuto.

Il diacono ravennate Martino, su invito del proprio vescovo, parte alla volta delle Alpi. Scoperto con l'aiuto della Provvidenza un nuovo passaggio, lo rivela a Carlo il quale può così aggirare gli stupitissimi uomini di Desiderio e Adelchi, disperderli, e penetrare nel cuore della "bella Italia".

La tensione poetica del resoconto che Martino fa a Carlo del proprio viaggio ci sembra paragonabile solo a quella dei passaggi più riusciti del coro di Ermengarda e trae maggiore risalto dal fatto di essere inserita quale digressione nella serie estremamente serrata degli eventi della tragedia.

Dunque il diacono Martino e Renzo "povero pellegrino" come personaggi con un obiettivo stabilito (l'accesso all'accampamento di Carlo, il fiume Adda) e con un itinerario sconosciuto. Lasciato a Dio. Sono accomunati da un passaggio che significa salvezza. Qui sembrerebbero finire le analogie: la salvezza personale dello sfortunato e imprudente Renzo avrebbe poco da spartire con la

salvezza di ben più ampio orizzonte che l'impresa di Martino rende possibile a favore della Chiesa e del suo Pastore. In realtà questa osservazione risulterà, nella valutazione critica dei due episodi, poco rilevante. Rilevanti sono invece le componenti profondamente spirituali e religiose comuni ai due viaggi.

Martino rischia la vita per giungere a Carlo "salvator di Roma". Tocca e si lascia alle spalle il campo dei feroci nemici:

Dio gli accecò, Dio mi guidò. Dal campo  
inosservato uscii; l'orme ripresi  
poco innanzi calcate; indi alla manca  
piegai verso aquilone, e abbandonando  
i battuti sentieri, in un'angusta  
oscura valle m'internai

(vv. 167-172)

e nel suo viaggio Dio è sempre presente:

Le vie di Dio son molte,  
più assai di quelle del mortal, risposi;  
e Dio mi manda.-E Dio ti scorga, ei disse

(vv. 186-188)

un giogo ascesi  
e in Dio fidando, lo varcai

(vv. 194-195)

Il compimento della sua impresa rappresenta, secondo uno schema tipicamente cristiano, la risoluzione provvidenziale-miracolosa di una crisi. Lo sottolineano esplicitamente i versi finali dell'episodio e in particolare la reazione di Carlo:

il guardo  
lanciai giù nella valle, e vidi... oh! vidi  
le tende d'Israello, i sospirati  
padiglion di Giacobbe: al suol prostrato,  
Dio ringraziai, li benedissi, e scesi.

CARLO

Empio colui che non vorrà la destra  
qui riconoscer dell'Eccelso!

(vv. 252-258)

Tra l'entrata nell'oscura valle e l'ampia visione finale (in chiave biblica) dell'accampamento carolingio, il Manzoni costruisce l'episodio di Martino usando efficacemente gli elementi eccelsi del paesaggio alpino.

Anche Renzo ha rischiato la vita. Si è lasciato alle spalle una città colma d'insidie. Si è messo in cammino nella pianura e dentro se stesso: "Andava dunque dove la strada lo conduceva; e pensava" (p. 291). La sua crisi, che ha toccato il fondo all'osteria della Luna Piena, con il trionfo della dismisura, dell'eccesso e con la dimenticanza di Dio, viene risolvendosi proprio nel corso della fuga verso il bergamasco. E' interessante che il suo viaggio, tra l'altro itinerario nella profondità della coscienza, abbia come meta immediata le acque dell'Adda, la voce dell'Adda.

E' stato detto che il XVII è il capitolo della catarsi, della rinascita spirituale di Renzo: "E' una vera e propria catarsi che si opera in Renzo attraverso l'esame dei suoi rapporti con le persone amate, un esame che si conclude nel pensiero fiducioso dell'abbandono alla volontà di Dio...Il concludersi della rinascita spirituale di Renzo è inquadrato da alcune fondamentali coordinate temporali e spaziali, tradotte in impressioni uditive e visive di una straordinaria suggestività, che, riprendendo armonicamente le emozioni su cui è tramata l'intera vicenda della sua crisi e della sua redenzione...creano un ambiente trepido di significati, di arcane allusioni ad una misteriosa presenza religiosa"<sup>2</sup>. L'Adda sembra come fornire l'acqua per il battesimo di questa rinascita e, in Renzo, la spirale di esaltazione emotiva sale da *amico* a *fratello* a *salvatore* (si veda più sotto l'intera citazione del passo).

All'inizio del capitolo Renzo, come Martino, prende a sinistra lasciando la strada maestra. Va incontro al buio della notte così come il diacono s'inoltrava nell'oscurità della valle: "Quantunque, nel momento che usciva di Gorgonzola, scoccassero le ventiquattro, e le tenebre che venivano innanzi, diminuissero sempre più que' pericoli, ciò non ostante prese contro voglia la strada maestra...Ben presto vide aprirsi una straducola a mancina; e v'entrò" (p. 291). Seguono le diverse sequenze del viaggio e, finalmente, trovato non solo l'Adda ma lì presso un rifugio per la notte, Renzo innalza, come Martino alla fine dell'impresa, una preghiera di ringraziamento: "Prima però di

sdraiarsi su quel letto che la Provvidenza gli aveva preparato, vi s'inginocchiò, a ringraziarla di quel beneficio, e di tutta l'assistenza che aveva avuta da essa, in quella terribile giornata. Disse poi le sue solite divozioni" (p. 295). Un ultimo esame di coscienza, ultimi chiaroscuri nell'anima, "una treccia nera e una barba bianca" (p. 296) e finalmente l'abbandono alla volontà di Dio: "quel che Dio vuole. Lui sa quel che fa: c'è anche per noi" (p. 297).

Le considerazioni fatte sinora pertengono in buona parte alla macrostruttura dei due episodi, ma è proprio nella microcomposizione del tessuto testuale che possiamo rintracciare una rete di somiglianze, di concordanze tra gli episodi in questione. E ciò pur trattandosi di viaggi di così diversa durata: alcuni giorni quello di Martino, alcune ore quello di Renzo.

Procedendo nel raffronto testuale ci riferiremo con M all'episodio di Martino e con R a quello di Renzo.

In M il viaggiatore s'imbatte in "gregge erranti e tuguri" in un luogo che risulta essere "l'ultima stanza de' mortali" (vv. 175-176). Più avanti si osserverà "Qui nulla / *traccia d'uomo* apparia" (vv. 195-196).

In R il viaggiatore a sua volta giunge in prossimità di "qualche *cascina* isolata" e prosegue il cammino arrivando "dove la campagna coltivata moriva in una sodaglia sparsa di felci e di scope". Non ci sono più viti, gelsi, "né altri *segni* di coltura *umana*" (p. 293). Tanto M quanto R sono improntati dal senso di una indeterminatezza spaziale, del trascorrere del tempo sopra questa indeterminatezza, del turbamento che provoca ciò che è sconosciuto e inesplorato. I passi seguenti mostrano in questo ambito interessanti sviluppi psicologici: in entrambi M e R, lo spazio dell'inconscio si espande nello spazio fisico che avvolge il personaggio.

M: "Oltre quei monti / sono altri monti... ed altri ancora... lontano lontan... e mille son que' monti... inabitati / se non da *spiriti* ed uomo mortal giammai / non li varcò" (vv. 180-186).

R: "Cammina, cammina,... ma ancora invano... e siccome nella sua mente cominciavano a suscitarsi certe immagini, certe *apparizioni*, lasciatevi in serbo dalle novelle sentite raccontar da bambino, così, per discacciarle, o per acquietarle, recitava, camminando, dell'orazioni per i morti" (p. 293).

Dunque, mentre il discorso riportato dal diacono Martino (un pastore gli sta indicando, vagamente, la via) s'impenna sulla descrizione di un paesaggio ostile, impraticabile, "impossibile", e nella evocazione di generici "spirti", per il giovane e fundamentalmente ingenuo Renzo vengono chiamati in causa spaventi legati a fantasie infantili.

Riproducendo le voci della natura, R concentra in unità "lo stesso *scrosciar* delle foglie secche" (p. 293) due elementi, lo scrosciare e i secchi suoni vegetali che in M hanno vita figurativa distinta: "e ad ora ad ora / lo *scrosciar* dei torrenti...o, sul meriggio,/ tocchi dal sole, *crepitar* del pino / silvestre i conì" (vv. 199-205). In entrambi i testi le voci della natura subiscono una elevazione espressiva del volume fonico, rispetto alla realtà del fenomeno descritto (*scrosciare* di foglie, invece di frusciare, *crepitare* dei conì). L'espressione è così ampliata ed esaltata perché oltre al brivido fisico oggettivo, lo *scrosciare* deve indicare anche l'incorporarsi di un brivido non fisico nella sensazione e, a vicenda quindi, l'installarsi della fisicità nello sgomento. Per conseguenza di questa ibridazione fisio-psicologica il momento successivo, in entrambi i testi, espande l'idea dell'incertezza nel cammino con una notazione che pertiene al sentimento. *Perdersi affatto* non è forse da intendere come superlativo di *perdersi* (che dovrebbe essere assoluto) ma come un suo modale (sentiva, tremava di perdersi); ad *affatto* in M corrisponde *pur*, con analogo valore connotativo.

In questa sequenza abbiamo in M la visione delle montagne innevate.

altre più eccelse *cime*, innanzi, intorno  
sovrastavanmi ancora; altre, di neve  
da sommo ad imo *biancheggianti*

(vv. 214-216)

Queste cime sono un elemento che si collega alla sequenza delle voci della natura in R dove si trasformano in cime di alberi "*cime* leggermente agitate" (p. 293) e il loro biancheggiare anticipa la "*gran macchia biancastra*" che è Bergamo all'occhio del viaggiatore nella sequenza che avvia la conclusione di R (p. 294).

Nella sequenza del ritrovamento vero e proprio la critica non ha mancato di rilevare una musicalità comune agli istanti del

ritrovamento dell'Adda in R e della scoperta del campo di Carlo in M<sup>3</sup>. In realtà si tratta di qualcosa di più: di puntuale coincidenza di elementi testuali. Vediamo come si organizza, in una identica successione di due tipi di percezioni, senso dell'udito e senso della vista, il movimento di ciascuna sequenza.

Si parte da una specie di preparazione fisico-spirituale. Martino, dopo una buona notte di sonno, si rimette in cammino con nuova speranza e nuovo vigore: "e pieno / di *novello vigor* la costa ascesi" (vv. 232-233). Anche Renzo, poi che reagisce positivamente da un lato alla spossatezza fisica "e spegnervi quell'ultimo rimasuglio di *vigore*" (p. 294) e dall'altro al terrore del buio, della solitudine e del suo stesso smarrimento, prova nuovo vigore di spirito: "richiamò al cuore gli antichi spiriti, e gli comandò che reggesse. Così *rinfrancato* un momento" (p. 294).

Si viene, quindi, al primo dei due momenti percettivi, quello uditivo.

M:

Appena il sommo ne toccai, l'orecchio  
mi percosse un ronzio che di lontano  
parea venir, cupo, incessante; io stetti,  
ed immoto ascoltai. Non eran l'acque  
rotte fra i sassi in giù; non era il vento  
che investia le foreste, e, sibilando  
d'una in altra scorrea, ma veramente  
un rumor di viventi, un indistinto  
suon di favelle e d'opre e di pedate  
brulicanti da lungi, un agitarsi  
d'uomini immenso. Il cor balzommi; e il passo  
accelerai

(vv. 234-245)

R:

E stando così fermo, sospeso il fruscio de' piedi nel fogliame, tutto  
tacendo d'intorno a lui, cominciò a sentire un rumore, un mormorio, un  
mormorio d'acqua corrente. Sta in orrecchi; n'è certo; esclama:-è  
l'Adda!- Fu il ritrovamento d'un amico, d'un fratello, d'un salvatore. La  
stanchezza quasi scomparve, gli tornò il polso, sentì il sangue scorrer  
libero e tepido per tutte le vene, sentì crescer la fiducia de' pensieri e  
svanire in gran parte quell'incertezza e gravità delle cose; e non esitò a  
internarsi sempre più nel bosco, dietro all'amico rumore.

(p. 294)

Confrontiamo.

M

R

l'orecchio / mi percosse...  
stetti, ed immoto ascoltai

E stando così fermo... comincio  
a sentire... Sta in orecchi

un ronzio...un rumor di viventi,  
un indistinto suon  
di favelle ...brulicanti

un rumore, un mormorio, un  
mormorio d'acqua corrente

(E' da rilevare come l'acqua  
corrente di R compaia per  
negazione in M: "Non eran l'acque"  
assieme ad immagini liquide: "d'una  
in altra scorrea")

il cor balzommi

gli tornò il polso, senti il  
sangue

e il passo accelerai

e non esitò a internarsi sempre  
più nel bosco

Si giunge così al momento nel quale è determinante e risoltrice la  
percezione ottica.

M:

Su questa, o re, che a noi  
sembra di qui lunga ed acuta cima  
fendere il ciel, quasi affilata scure,  
giace un'ampia pianura, e d'erbe è folta  
non mai calcate in pria. Presi di quella  
il più breve tragitto: ad ogni istante  
si fea il rumor più presso: divorai  
l'estrema via: giunsi sull'orlo: il guardo  
lanciai giù nella valle, e vidi...oh! vidi

(vv. 245-253)

R:

Arrivò in pochi momenti all'estremità del piano, sull'orlo d'una riva  
profonda; e guardando in giù tra le macchie che tutta la rivestivano, vide  
l'acqua luccicare e correre. Alzando poi lo sguardo, vide il vasto piano  
dell'altra riva, sparso di paesi, e al di là i colli, e sur uno di quelli una gran  
macchia biancastra, che gli parve dover esser una città, Bergamo  
sicuramente.

(p. 294)



Confrontiamo ancora.

M	R
un'ampia pianura	all'estremità del piano... il vasto piano
e d'erbe è folta	tra le macchie che tutta la rivestivano
divorai / l'estrema via	Arrivò in pochi momenti all'estremità del piano
giunsi sull'orlo	sull'orlo d'una riva profonda
il guardo / lanciai giù	e guardando in giù
vidi...oh! vidi	vide l'acqua...vide il vasto piano

Siamo ancora una volta in presenza di coincidenze testuali che ci pongono, tra l'altro, il problema del meccanismo mentale del Manzoni nei confronti di questa particolare materia.

Ci sembra che gli esempi riportati siano sufficienti a caratterizzare M e R nelle loro connessioni; e se la natura della nostra indagine cerca di essere anche microscopica, non è detto che strumenti critici di maggiore precisione non possano individuare altri esempi. Potremmo proporre all'attenzione un confronto tra i due giacigli rustici di M (vv. 278-231) e di R (p. 295) ed altri luoghi ancora. Tuttavia, piuttosto che procedere nell'analisi, è forse opportuno, a questo punto, trarre qualche conclusione.

Gli episodi di Martino sulle Alpi e di Renzo in prossimità dell'Adda ci presentano due casi di viaggio-salvezza (non possono non venire alla mente antecedenti di sacra scrittura: il viaggio dei Magi, la fuga in Egitto, e pratiche religiose come la processione e il pellegrinaggio) a forte componente spirituale e religiosa.

Il raffronto degli episodi evidenzia il ricorso, da parte dell'autore, a comuni sequenze ed elementi testuali. E' un uso per così dire liturgico che il Manzoni fa dei propri oggetti testuali, come se ripetesse momenti rituali di una cerimonia: una certa successione, certi strumenti, atteggiamenti, colori, parole e suoni, al momento di trattare un certo tipo da viaggio investito di un valore quasi sacramentale all'interno dell'opera.

Andiamo per un attimo al già di stuggita citato capitolo VIII dei *Promessi Sposi*. Anche qui una fuga, un viaggio verso la salvezza. Più accorato che spirituale, vibrante per nostalgico struggimento e non improntato a risoluzione catartica o miracolosa, portatore di una crisi che non si risolve immediatamente, questo episodio (il congedo panoramico dalla patria, sulla barca che scende silenziosa) può essere solo parzialmente collegato a quelli già presi in esame. Riconsideriamo tuttavia, in esso, il tanto celebrato "Addio, monti" nella sua prima movenza:

Addio, monti sorgenti dall'acque, ed elevati al cielo; cime inuguali, note a chi è cresciuto tra voi, e impresse nella sua mente, non meno che lo sia l'aspetto de'suoi più familiari; torrenti, de' quali distingue lo scroscio, come il suono delle voci domestiche; ville sparse e biancheggianti sul pendio, come branchi di pecore pascenti: addio!

(p. 143)

Facilmente saltano all'occhio alcuni oggetti della liturgia manzoniana del viaggio: le cime (qui di montagne come in M e non di alberi come in R), l'effetto fonico dello scrosciare, il biancheggiare di un particolare elemento del paesaggio "ville sparse e biancheggianti sul pendio come branchi di pecore pascenti", qui in congiunzione con un altro elemento già presente in M: "Qui scorsi / gregge erranti" (vv. 174-175). E' chiaro che la presenza sporadica di questi elementi non aggiunge molto al blocco compatto formato da M e da R. Si tratta di una conferma non decisiva di una certa fissità formulare delle scelte manzoniane nell'ambito di una materia. Chi volesse, però, tentare uno studio più esauriente ed articolato del nostro, non dovrebbe trascurare questo brano.

In ogni caso andrà sempre tenuto presente il dato della vicinanza cronologica tra la composizione dell'*Adelchi* e le stesure del romanzo (*Fermo e Lucia* e primi *Promessi Sposi*).

Dunque, la fissità formulare, liturgica, di cui abbiamo parlato, sembra suggerire una risonanza assoluta che il tema del viaggio doveva avere nell'animo del Manzoni.

A questo punto potrebbe venire la tentazione di affermare che l'elevazione a potenza della dimensione spirituale e salvifica del viaggio deve per forza collegarsi alla visione cristiana della transitorietà dell'esperienza terrena (l'anima pellegrina sulla terra);

all'immagine del cristiano tutto rivolto e incamminato verso i "floridi sentier della speranza" e i "campi eterni". Ipotesi attraente ma difficilmente dimostrabile. Sarà bene, quindi, non spingersi troppo oltre se non si vorrà correre il rischio di imitare, nella sua balda e ciarlieria imprudenza, il Renzo del "debol parere" e della Luna Piena.

## Note

Le citazioni testuali sono tratte per *I Promessi Sposi* dall'ediz. a cura di A. Chiari e F. Ghisalberti, 3a ed., Milano, 1963. Per *Adelchi* dall'ediz. a cura di R. Bacchelli, Milano-Napoli, 1953.

1. G. Getto, *Lecture manzoniane*, Firenze, 1964, p. 271
2. G. Getto, *Op.cit.*, pp. 279-280
3. A. Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi*, commento critico di L. Russo, nuova ed., 2a ristampa, p. 321, nota 133-138.



Ph.D. DISSERTATIONS IN ITALIAN STUDIES  
at UCLA, 1970-80

As a bibliographical reference, *Carte Italiane* is including the following list of dissertations in Italian Studies completed at UCLA through the departments of Italian and Comparative Literature from 1970 to 1980.

This section of the journal will be supplemented in future volumes by the addition of dissertation summaries. We hope that this bibliographical information will prove useful to students and scholars of Italian Studies everywhere.

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